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In thirty-two volumes

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THE PASSING OF NEW FRANCE

BY WILLIAM WOOD

Part III

The English Invasion

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MONTCALM AT THE BATTLE OF THE PLAINS, 1759

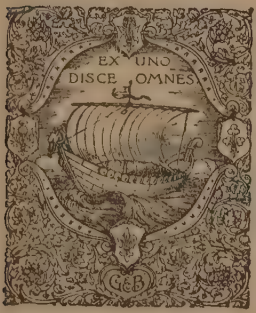
From a colour drawing by C. W. Jefferys

THE PASSING OF NEW FRANCE

A Chronicle of Montcalm

BY

WILLIAM WOOD



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CHAPTER I

MONTCALM IN FRANCE

1712–1756

'WAR is the grave of the Montcalms.' No one can tell how old this famous saying is. Perhaps it is as old as France herself. Certainly there never was a time when the men of the great family of Montcalm-Gozon were not ready to fight for their king and country; and so Montcalm, like Wolfe, was a soldier born.

Even in the Crusades his ancestors were famous all over Europe. When the Christians of those brave days were trying to drive the unbelievers out of Palestine they gladly followed leaders whom they thought saintly and heroic enough to be their champions against the dragons of sultan, satan, and hell; for people then believed that dragons fought on the devil's side, and that only Christian knights, like St George, fighting on God's side, could kill them. The Christians banded

themselves together in many ways, among others in the Order of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, taking an oath to be faithful unto death. They chose the best man among them to be their Grand Master; and so it could have been only after much devoted service that Deodat de Gozon became Grand Master, more than five hundred years ago, and was granted the right of bearing the conquered Dragon of Rhodes on the family coat of arms, where it is still to be seen. How often this glorious badge of victory reminded our own Montcalm of noble deeds and noble men! How often it nerved him to uphold the family tradition!

There are centuries of change between Crusaders and Canadians. Yet the Montcalms can bridge them with their honour. And, among all the Montcalms who made their name mean soldier's honour in Eastern or European war, none have given it so high a place in the world's history as the hero whose life and death in Canada made it immortal. He won the supreme glory for his name, a glory so bright that it shone even through the dust of death which shrouded the France of the Revolution. In 1790, when the National Assembly was suppressing

pensions granted by the Crown, it made a special exception in favour of Montcalm's children. As kings, marquises, heirs, and pensions were among the things the Revolution hated most, it is a notable tribute to our Marquis of Montcalm that the revolutionary parliament should have paid to his heirs the pension granted by a king. Nor has another century of change in France blotted out his name and fame. The *Montcalm* was the French flagship at the naval review held in honour of the coronation of King Edward VII. The *Montcalm* took the President of France to greet his ally the Czar of Russia. And, but for a call of duty elsewhere at the time, the *Montcalm* would have flown the French admiral's flag in 1908, at the celebration of the Tercentenary of the founding of Quebec, when King George V led the French- and English-speaking peoples of the world in doing honour to the twin renown of Wolfe and Montcalm on the field where they won equal glory, though unequal fortune.

Montcalm was a leap-year baby, having been born on February 29, 1712, in the family castle of Candiac, near Nîmes, a very old city of the south of France, a city with many forts built by the Romans two thousand

years ago. He came by almost as much good soldier blood on his mother's side as on his father's, for she was one of the Castellanes, with numbers of heroic ancestors, extending back to the First Crusade.

The Montcalms had never been rich. They had many heroes but no millionaires. Yet they were well known and well loved for their kindness to all the people on their estates; and so generous to every one in trouble, and so ready to spend their money as well as their lives for the sake of king and country, that they never could have made great fortunes, even had their estate been ten times as large as it was. Accordingly, while they were famous and honoured all over France, they had to be very careful about spending money on themselves. They all—and our own Montcalm in particular—spent much more in serving their country than their country ever spent in paying them to serve it.

Montcalm was a delicate little boy of six when he first went to school. He had many schoolboy faults. He found it hard to keep quiet or to pay attention to his teacher; he was backward in French grammar; and he wrote a very bad hand. Many a letter of complaint was sent to his father. 'It seems to

me,' writes the teacher, 'that his handwriting is getting worse than ever. I show him, again and again, how to hold his pen; but he will not do it properly. I think he ought to try to make up for his want of cleverness by being more docile, taking more pains, and listening to my advice.' And then poor old Dumas would end with an exclamation of despair—'What will become of him!'

Dumas had another pupil who was much more to his taste. This was Montcalm's younger brother, Jean, who knew his letters before he was three, read Latin when he was five, and Greek and Hebrew when he was six. Dumas was so proud of this infant prodigy that he took him to Paris and showed him off to the learned men of the day, who were dumbfounded at so much knowledge in so young a boy. All this, however, was too much for a youthful brain; and poor Jean died at the age of seven.

Dumas then turned sadly to the elder boy, who was in no danger of being killed by too much study, and soon renewed his complaints. At last Montcalm, now sixteen and already an officer, could bear it no longer, and wrote to his father telling him that in spite of his supposed stupidity he had serious aims. 'I want

to be, first, a man of honour, brave, and a good Christian. Secondly, I want to read moderately; to know as much Greek and Latin as other men; also arithmetic, history, geography, literature, and some art and science. Thirdly, I want to be obedient to you and my dear mother, and listen to Mr Dumas's advice. Lastly, I want to manage a horse and handle a sword as well as ever I can.' The result of it all was that Montcalm became a good Latin scholar, a very well read man, an excellent horseman and swordsman, and—to dominie Dumas's eternal confusion—such a master of French that he might have been as great an author as he was a soldier. His letters and dispatches from the seat of war remind one of Cæsar's. He wrote like a man who sees into the heart of things and goes straight to the point with the fewest words which will express exactly what he wishes to say. In this he was like Wolfe, and like many another great soldier whose quick eye, cool head and warm heart, all working together in the service of his country, give him a command over words which often equals his command over men.

In 1727, the year Wolfe was born, Montcalm joined his father's regiment as an ensign. Presently, in 1733, the French and Germans

fell out over the naming of a king for Poland. Montcalm went to the front and had what French soldiers call his 'baptism of fire.' This war gave him little chance of learning how great battles should be fought. But he saw two sieges; he kept his eyes open to everything that happened; and, even in camp, he did not forget his studies. 'I am learning German,' he wrote home, 'and I am reading more Greek than I have read for three or four years.'

The death of his father in 1735 made him the head of the family of Montcalm. The next year he married Angélique Talon du Boulay, a member of a military family, and grand-daughter of Denis Talon, a kinsman of Jean Talon, the best intendant who ever served New France. For the next twenty years, from 1736 to 1756, he spent in his ancestral castle of Candiac as much of his time as he could spare from the army. There he had been born, and there he always hoped he could live and die among his own people after his wars were over. How often he was to sigh for one look at his pleasant olive groves when he was far away, upholding the honour of France against great British odds and, far worse, against secret enemies on the French

side in the dying colony across the sea! But for the present all this was far off. Meanwhile, Candiac was a very happy home; and Montcalm's wife and his mother made it the happier by living together under the same roof. In course of time ten children were born, all in the family château.

Montcalm's second war was the War of the Austrian Succession, a war in which his younger opponent Wolfe saw active service for the first time. The two future opponents in Canada never met, however, on the same battlefields in Europe. In 1741, the year in which Wolfe received his first commission, Montcalm fought so well in Bohemia that he was made a Knight of St Louis. Two years later, at the age of thirty-one, he was promoted to the command of a regiment which he led through three severe campaigns in Italy. During the third campaign, in 1746, there was a terrific fight against the Austrians under the walls of Placentia. So furious was the Austrian attack that the French army was almost destroyed. Twice was Montcalm's regiment broken by sheer weight of numbers. But twice he rallied it and turned to face the enemy again. The third attack was the worst of all. Montcalm still fought on, though

already he had three bullet wounds, when the Austrian cavalry made a dashing charge and swept the French off the field altogether. He met them, sword in hand, as dauntless as ever; but he was caught in a whirlwind of sabre-cuts and was felled to the ground with two great gashes in his head. He was taken prisoner; but was soon allowed to go home, on giving his word of honour, or 'parole,' that he would take no further part in the war until some Austrian prisoner, of the same rank as his own, was given back by the French in exchange. While still on parole he was promoted to be a brigadier, so that he could command more than a single regiment. In due time, when proper exchange of prisoners was made, Montcalm went back to Italy, again fought splendidly, and again was badly wounded. The year 1748 closed with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and seven years of peace followed before the renewed tumult of the Seven Years' War.

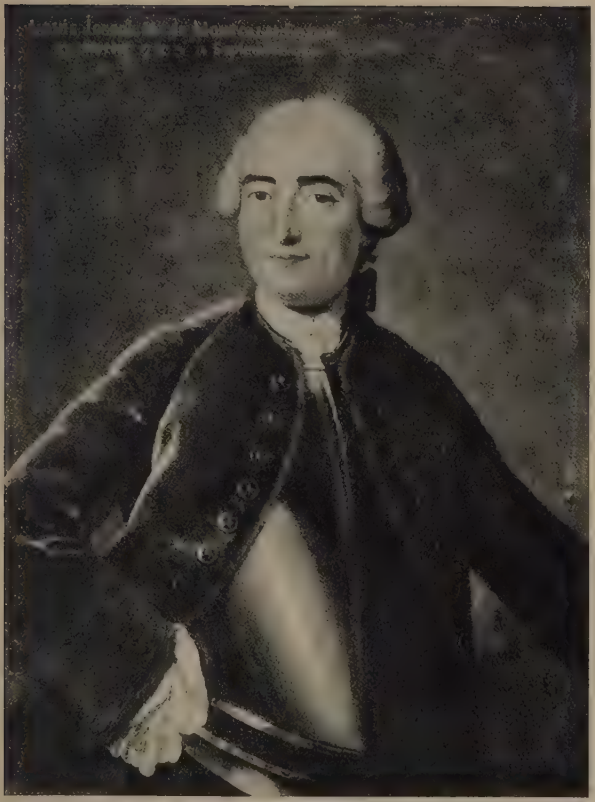
Life went very well with Montcalm at Candiac. He was there as much as possible, and spent his time between his castle and his olive groves, his study and his family circle. His eldest son was a young man of much promise, growing immensely tall, devoted to

the army, and engaged to be married. His wife and her mother-in-law were as happy as ever with him and with each other. Nothing seemed more peaceful than that quiet corner in the pleasant land of southern France.

But the age-long rivalry of French and British could not long be stilled. Even in 1754 there were rumours of war from the Far East in India and from the Far West in Canada. Next year, though peace was outwardly kept in Europe, both the great rivals sent fleets and armies to America, where the clash of arms had already been heard. There were losses on both sides. And, when the French general, Baron Dieskau, was made prisoner, the minister of War, knowing the worth of Montcalm, asked him to think over the proposal that he should take command in New France.

On January 26, 1756, the formal offer came in a letter approved by the king. 'The king has chosen you to command his troops in North America, and will honour you on your departure with the rank of major-general. But what will please you still more is that His Majesty will put your son in your place at the head of your present regiment. The applause of the public will add to your satisfaction.'

On the very day Montcalm received this



MONTCALM

After the original painting owned by the Marquis de Montcalm

letter he made up his mind, accepted the command, bade good-bye to Candiac, and set out for Paris. From Lyons he wrote to his mother: 'I am reading with much pleasure the *History of New France* by Father Charlevoix. He gives a pleasant description of Quebec.' From Paris he wrote to his wife: 'Do not expect any long letter before the 1st of March. All my pressing work will then be finished, and I shall be able to breathe once more. Last night I came from Versailles and I am going back to-morrow. My outfit will cost me a thousand crowns more than the amount I am paid to cover it. But I cannot stop for that.' On March 15 he wrote home: 'Yesterday I presented my son, with whom I am very well pleased, to all the royal family.' Three days later he wrote to his wife: 'I shall be at Brest on the twenty-first. My son has been here since yesterday, for me to coach him and also in order to get his uniform properly made. He will thank the king for his promotion at the same time that I make my adieux in my embroidered coat. Perhaps I shall leave some debts behind me. I wait impatiently for the accounts. You have my will. I wish you would have it copied, and would send me the duplicate before I sail.'

On April 3 Montcalm left Brest in the *Licorne*, a ship of the little fleet which the French were hurrying out to Canada before war should be declared in Europe. The passage proved long and stormy. But Montcalm was lucky in being a much better sailor than his great opponent Wolfe. Impatient to reach the capital at the earliest possible moment he rowed ashore from below the island of Orleans, where the *Licorne* met a contrary wind, and drove up to Quebec, a distance of twenty-five miles. It was May 13 when he first passed along the Beauport shore between Montmorency and Quebec. Three years and nine days later he was to come back to that very point, there to make his last heroic stand.

On the evening of his arrival Bigot the intendant gave a magnificent dinner-party for him. Forty guests sat down to the banquet. Montcalm had not expected that the poor struggling colony could boast such a scene as this. In a letter home he said: 'Even a Parisian would have been astonished at the profusion of good things on the table. Such splendour and good cheer show how much the intendant's place is worth.' We shall soon hear more of Bigot the intendant.

On the 26th Montcalm arrived at Montreal to see the Marquis of Vaudreuil the governor. The meeting went off very well. The governor was as full of airs and graces as the intendant, and said that nothing else in the world could have given him so much pleasure as to greet the general sent out to take command of the troops from France. We shall soon hear more of Vaudreuil the governor.

CHAPTER II

MONTCALM IN CANADA

1756

THE French colonies in North America consisted of nothing more than two very long and very thin lines of scattered posts and settlements, running up the St Lawrence and the Mississippi to meet, in the far interior, at the Great Lakes. Along the whole of these four thousand miles there were not one hundred thousand people. Only two parts of the country were really settled at all: one Acadia, the other the shores of the St Lawrence between Bic and Montreal; and both regions together covered not more than four hundred of the whole four thousand miles. There were but three considerable towns — Louisbourg, Quebec, and Montreal — and Quebec, which was much the largest, had only twelve thousand inhabitants.

The territory bordering on the Mississippi was called Louisiana. That in the St Lawrence

Hudson Bay
RUPERTS LAND
(HUDSON BAY CO)
NEW FRANCE
CANADA OR
ENGLISH COLONIES
LOUISIANA
NEW SPAIN
GULF OF MEXICO
CARIBBEAN SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
UNEXPLORED
SOUTH AMERICA
Saskatchewan R.
L. Winnipeg
Albany R.
Moose R.
L. of the Woods
Quebec
Montreal
St Lawrence R.
Tyconderoga
Albany
Boston
New Plymouth
Providence
New York
Philadelphia
Wilmington
St Mary's
Ft Duquesne
Mississippi R.
Vincennes
Ohio R.
Kaskaskia
Arkansas R.
Red R.
Colorado R.
Santa Fe
Rio Grande
Mexico
Pensacola
St Augustine
New Orleans
Wilmington
Charleston
Port Royal
Bermudas
Bahama Is
Havana
CUBA
Hayti
San Domingo
I. OF HAYTI
Porto Rico
Jamaica
BELIZE
GUATEMALA
Anticosti
Newfoundland
Cape Breton
Louisbourg
St John's
Halifax
NORTH AMERICA
1755 - 60
English Miles
0 100 200 300 400 500 1000
English
French
Spanish
Unexplored
Bartholomew. Edin.

region was called New France along the river and Acadia down by the Gulf; though Canada is much the best word to cover both. Now, Canada had ten times as many people as Louisiana; and Louisiana by itself seemed helplessly weak. This very weakness made the French particularly anxious about the country south of the Lakes, where Canada and Louisiana met. For, so long as they held it, they held the gateways of the West, kept the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi quite securely, shut up the British colonies between the Alleghany Mountains and the Atlantic and prevented them from expanding westward. One other thing was even more vital than this to the French in America: it was that they should continue to hold the mouth of the St Lawrence. Canada could live only by getting help from France; and as this help could not come up the Mississippi it had to come up the St Lawrence.

The general position of the French may be summed up briefly. First, and most important of all, they had to hold the line of the St Lawrence for a thousand miles in from the sea. Here were their three chief positions: Louisbourg, Quebec, and Lake Champlain.

Secondly, they had to hold another thousand miles westward, to and across the Lakes; but especially the country south of Lakes Ontario and Erie, into the valley of the Ohio. Here there were a few forts, but no settlements worth speaking of.

Thirdly, they had to hold the valley of the Mississippi, two thousand miles from north to south. Here there were very few forts, very few men, and no settlements of any kind. In fact, they held the Mississippi only by the merest thread, and chiefly because the British colonies had not yet grown out in that direction. The Mississippi did not come into the war, though it might have done so. If Montcalm had survived the battle of the Plains, and if in 1760 the defence of Canada on the St Lawrence had seemed to him utterly hopeless, his plan would probably then have been to take his best soldiers from Canada into the interior, and in the end to New Orleans, there to make a last desperate stand for France among the swamps. But this plan died with him; and we may leave the valley of the Mississippi out of our reckoning altogether.

Not so the valley of the Ohio, which, as we have seen, was the meeting-place of Canada and Louisiana, and the chief gateway to the

West; and which the French and British rivals were both most fiercely set on possessing. It was here that the world-wide Seven Years' War first broke out; here that George Washington first appeared as an American commander; here that Braddock led the first westbound British army; and here that Montcalm struck his first blow for French America.

But, as we have also seen, even the valley of the Ohio was less important than the line of the St Lawrence. The Ohio region was certainly the right arm of French America. But the St Lawrence was the body, of which the lungs were Louisbourg, and the head and heart Quebec. Montcalm saw this at once; and he made no single mistake in choosing the proper kind of attack and defence during the whole of his four campaigns.

The British colonies were different in every way from the French. The French held a long, thin line of four thousand miles, forming an inland loop from the Gulf of St Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, with only one hundred thousand people sparsely settled in certain spots; the British filled up the solid inside of this loop with over twelve hundred thousand people, who had an open seaboard on the

Atlantic for two thousand miles, from Nova Scotia down to Florida.

Now, what could have made such a great difference in growth between the French and the British colonies, when France had begun with all the odds of European force and numbers in her favour? The answer is two-fold: France had no adequate fleets and her colonies had no adequate freedom.

First, as to fleets. The mere fact that the Old and New Worlds had a sea between them meant that the power with the best navy would have a great advantage. The Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, and French all tried to build empires across the sea. But they all failed whenever they came to blows with Britain, simply because no empire can live cut up into separate parts. The sea divided the other empires, while, strange as it may appear, this same sea united the British. The French were a nation of landsmen, for one very good reason that they had two land frontiers to defend. Their kings and statesmen understood armies better than navies, and the French people themselves liked soldiers better than sailors. The British, on the other hand, since they lived on an island, had no land frontiers to defend. The people liked sailors better than soldiers. And

their rulers understood navies better than armies, for the sea had always been the people's second home.

At this period, whenever war broke out, the British navy was soon able to win 'the command of the sea'; that is, its squadrons soon made the sea a safe road for British ships and a very unsafe road for the ships of an enemy. In America, at that time, everything used in war, from the regular fleets and armies themselves down to the powder and shot, cannon and muskets, swords and bayonets, tools, tents, and so on—all had to be brought across the Atlantic. While this was well enough for the British, for the French it was always very hard and risky work. In time of war their ships were watched, chased and taken whenever they appeared on the sea. Even during peace they had much the worse of it, for they had to spend great sums and much effort in building vessels to make up for the men of-war and the merchant ships which they had lost and the British had won. Thus they never quite succeeded in beginning again on even terms with their triumphant rival.

We must remember, too, that every sort of trade and money-making depended on the command of the sea, which itself depended

on the stronger navy. Even the trade with Indians in America, two thousand miles inland, depended on defeat or victory at sea. The French might send out ships full of things to exchange for valuable furs. But if they lost their ships they lost their goods, and in consequence the trade and even the friendship of the Indians. In the same way the navy helped or hindered the return trade from America to Europe. The furs and food from the British colonies crossed over in safety, and the money or other goods in exchange came safely back. But the French ships were not safe, and French merchants were often ruined by the capture of their ships or by having the sea closed to them.

To follow out all the causes and effects of the command of the sea would be far too long a story even to begin here. But the gist of it is quite short and quite plain: no Navy, no Empire. That is what it meant then, and that is what it means now.

Secondly, as to freedom in the French colonies. Of course, freedom itself, no matter how good it is and how much we love it, would have been nothing without the protection of fleets. All the freedom in the world cannot hold two countries on opposite sides of the sea together without the link of strong fleets. But

even the strongest fleet would not have helped New France to grow as fast and as well as New England grew. The French people were not free in the motherland. They were not free as colonists in Canada. All kinds of laws and rules were made for the Canadians by persons thousands of miles away. This interference came from men who knew scarcely anything about Canada. They had crude notions as to what should be done, and sometimes they ordered the men on the spot to do impossible things. The result was that the men on the spot, if they were bad enough and clever enough, just hoodwinked the government in France, and did in Canada what they liked and what made for their own profit.

Now, Bigot the intendant, the man of affairs in the colony, was on the spot; and he was one of the cleverest knaves ever known, with a feeble colony in his power. He had nothing to fear from the people, the poor, helpless French Canadians. He had nothing to fear from their governor, the vain, incompetent Vaudreuil. He was, moreover, three thousand miles away from the French court, which was itself full of parasites. He had been given great power in Canada. As intendant he was the head of everything except the

army, the navy, and the church. He had charge of all the public money and all the public works and whatever else might be called public business. Of course, he was supposed to look after the interests of France and of Canada, not after his own; and earlier intendants like Talon had done this with perfect honesty. But Bigot soon organized a gang of men like himself, and gathered into his grasping hands the control of the private as well as of the public business.

One example will show how he worked. Whenever food became dangerously scarce in Canada the intendant's duty was to buy it up, to put it into the king's stores, and to sell out only enough for the people to live on till the danger was over. There was a reason for this, as Canada, cut off from France, was like a besieged fortress, and it was proper to treat the people as a garrison would be treated, and to make provision for the good of the whole. But when Bigot had formed his gang, and had, in some way, silenced Vaudreuil, he declared Canada in danger when it was not, seized all the food he could lay hands on, and sent it over to France; sent it, too, in the king's ships, that it might be carried free. Then he made Vaudreuil send word to the king that Canada

was starving. In the meantime, his friends in France had stored the food, and had then assured the king that there was plenty of grain in hand which they could ship to Canada at once. The next step was to get an order from the king to buy this food to be shipped to Canada. This order was secured through influential friends in Paris, and, of course, the price paid by the king was high. The food was then sent back to Canada, again in the king's ships. Then Bigot and his friends in Canada put it not into the king's but into their own stores in Quebec, sold it to the king's stores once more, as they had sold it in France, and then effected a third sale, this time to the wretched French Canadians from whom they had bought it for next to nothing at first. Thus both the king and the French Canadians were each robbed twice over, thanks to Vaudreuil's complaisance and Bigot's official position as also representing the king.

Bigot had been some time in Canada before Vaudreuil arrived as governor in 1755. He had already cheated a good deal. But it was only when he found out what sort of man Vaudreuil was that he set to work to do his worst. Bigot was a knave, Vaudreuil a fool. Vaudreuil was a French Canadian born and

very jealous of any one from France, unless the Frenchman flattered him as Bigot did. He loved all sorts of pomp and show, and thought himself the greatest man in America. Bigot played on this weakness with ease and could persuade him to sign any orders, no matter how bad they were.

Now, when an owl like Vaudreuil and a fox like Bigot were ruining Canada between them, they were anything but pleased to see a lion like Montcalm come out with an army from France. Vaudreuil, indeed, had done all he could to prevent the sending out of Montcalm. He wrote to France several times, saying that no French general was needed, that separate regiments under their own colonels would suffice, and that he himself could command the regulars from France, just as he did the Canadians.

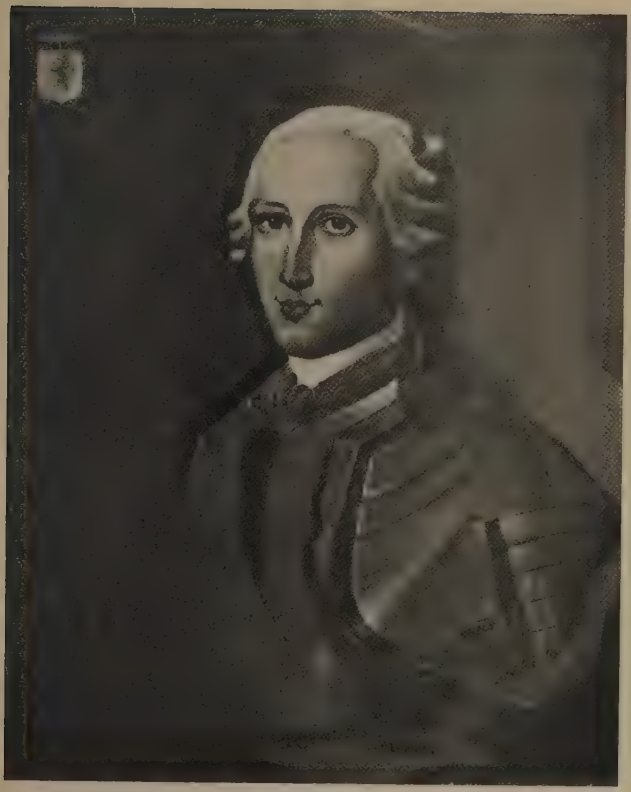
But how did he command the Canadians? By law every Canadian had to serve as a soldier, without pay, whenever the country was in danger. By law every man needed for carrying supplies to the far-off outposts could also be taken; but, in this case, he had to be paid. Now, all the supplies and the carriage of them were under Bigot's care. So when the Canadians were called out as soldiers, with-

out pay, Bigot's gang would ask them if they would rather go and be shot for nothing or carry supplies in safety for pay. Of course, they chose the carrier's work and the pay, though half the pay was stolen from them. At the same time their names were still kept on the muster rolls as soldiers. This was the reason why Montcalm often had only half the militia called out for him: the other half were absent as carriers, and the half which remained for Montcalm was made up of those men whom Bigot's friends did not think good enough for carriers.

But there were more troubles still for Montcalm and his army. As governor, Vaudreuil was, of course, the head of everything in the country, including the army. This was right enough, if he had been fit for his post, because a country must have a supreme head, and the army is only a part, though the most important part, in war. A soldier may be also a statesman and at the head of everything, as were Cromwell, Napoleon, and Frederick the Great. But a statesman who is not a soldier only ruins an army if he tries to command it himself. And this was precisely what Vaudreuil did. Indeed, he did worse, for, while he did not go into the field himself, he continued

to give orders to Montcalm at every turn. Besides, instead of making all the various forces on the French side into one army he kept them as separate as he could—five parts and no whole.

It should be made clear what these five parts were. First, there were the French regulars, the best of all, commanded by Montcalm, who was himself under Vaudreuil. Next, there were the Canadian regulars and the Canadian militia, both directly under Vaudreuil. Then there were the French sailors, under their own officers, but subject to Vaudreuil. Montcalm had to report to the minister of War in Paris about the French regulars, and to the minister of Marine about the Canadians of both kinds. Vaudreuil reported to both ministers, usually against Montcalm; and the French naval commander reported to his own minister on his own account. So there was abundant opportunity to make trouble among the four French forces. But there was more trouble still with the fifth force, the Indians, who were under their own chiefs. These men admired Montcalm; but they had to make treaties with Vaudreuil. They were cheated by Bigot and were offered presents by the British. As they very naturally desired to



VAUDREUIL

From the painting in the Château de Ramezay

keep their own country for themselves in their own way they always wished to side with the stronger of the two white rivals, if they could not get rid of both.

Such was the Canada of 1756, a country in quite as much danger from French parasites as from British patriots. It might have lasted for some years longer if there had been no general war. The American colonists, though more than twelve to one, could not have conquered it alone, because they had no fleet and no regular army. But the war came, and it was a great one. In a great war a country of parasites has no chance against a country of patriots. All the sins of sloth and wilful weakness, of demagogues and courtiers, and whatever else is rotten in the state, are soon found out and punished by war. Canada under Vaudreuil and Bigot was no match for an empire under Pitt. For one's own parasites are always the worst of one's enemies. So the last great fight for Canada was not a fight of three against three; but of one against five. Montcalm the lion stood utterly alone, with two secret foes behind him and three open foes in front—Vaudreuil the owl, and Bigot the fox, behind; Pitt, Saunders and Wolfe, three lions like himself, in front.

CHAPTER III

OSWEGO

1756

In 1753 the governor of Virginia had sent Washington, then a young major of only twenty-one, to see what the French were doing in the valley of the Ohio, where they had been busy building forts to shut the gateway of the West against the British and to keep it open for themselves. The French officers at a post which they called Venango received Washington very politely and asked him to supper. Washington wrote in his diary that, after they had drunk a good deal of wine, 'they told me that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and by God they would do it.' When Washington had returned home and reported, the Virginians soon sent him back with a small force to turn the French out. But meanwhile the French had been making themselves much stronger, and on July 4, 1754,

when Washington advanced into the disputed territory, he was overcome and obliged to surrender—a strange Fourth of July for him to look back upon!

Exciting events followed rapidly. In 1755 Braddock came out from England with a small army of regulars to take command of the British forces in America and drive the French from the Ohio valley. But there were many difficulties. The governments of the thirteen British colonies were jealous of each other and of the government in Britain; their militia were jealous of the British regulars, who in turn looked down on them. In the end, with only a few Virginians to assist him, Braddock marched into a country perfectly new to him and his men. The French and Indians, quite at home in the dense forest, laid an ambush for the British regulars. These stood bravely, but they could not see a single enemy to fire at. They were badly defeated, and Braddock was killed. The British had a compensating success a few weeks later when, in the centre of Canada, beside Lake George, the French general, Baron Dieskau, was defeated almost as badly as Braddock had been. Following this, down by the Gulf the French Acadians were rooted out of Nova Scotia, for

fear that they might join the other French in the coming war. Their lot was a hard one, but as they had been British subjects for forty years and had always refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British crown, and as they were being constantly stirred up against British rule, it was decided that they could not be safely left inside the British frontier.

At sea the French had also suffered loss. Admiral Boscawen had seized two ships with four hundred seasoned French regulars on board destined for Canada. The French then sent out another four hundred to replace them. But no veteran soldiers could be spared. So the second four hundred, raised from all sorts of men, were of poor quality, and spoiled the discipline of the regiments they joined in Canada. One of the regiments, which had the worst of these recruits, proved to be the least trustworthy in the final struggle before Quebec in 1759. Thus the power of the British navy in the Gulf of St Lawrence in 1755 made itself felt four years later, and a long distance away, at the very crisis of the war on land.

Strange as it seems to us now, all this fighting had taken place in a time of nominal peace. But in 1756 the Seven Years' War broke out in Europe, and then many plans were made,

especially in the English colonies in America, for the conquest of Canada. The British forces were greater than the French, all told on both sides, both then and throughout the war. But the thirteen colonies could not agree. Some of them were hot, others lukewarm, others, such as the Quakers of Pennsylvania, cold. Moreover, the British generals were of little use, and the colonial ones squabbled as the colonies themselves squabbled. Pitt had not yet taken charge of the war, and the British in America were either doing nothing or doing harm.

There was only one trained and competent general on the whole continent; and that general was Montcalm. Though new to warfare in the wilds he soon understood it as well as those who had waged it all their lives; and he saw at a glance that an attack on Oswego was the key to the whole campaign. Louisbourg was, as yet, safe enough; and the British movements against Lake Champlain were so slow and foolish that he turned them to good account for his own purposes.

At the end of June, 1756, Montcalm arrived at Ticonderoga, where he had already posted his second-in-command, the Chevalier de Lévis, with 3000 men. He walked all over

the country thereabouts and seized the lie of the land so well that he knew it thoroughly when he came back, two years later, and won his greatest victory. He kept his men busy too. He moved them forward so boldly and so cleverly that the British who had been planning the capture of the fort never thought of attacking him, but made sure only of defending themselves. All this was but a feint to put the British off their guard elsewhere. Suddenly, while Lévis kept up the show of force, Montcalm himself left secretly for Montreal, saw Vaudreuil, who, like Bigot, was still all bows and smiles, and left again, with equal suddenness, for Fort Frontenac (now Kingston) on July 21. From this point he intended to attack Oswego.

At the entrance to the Thousand Islands there was a point, called by the voyageurs Point Baptism, where every new-comer into the 'Upper Countries' had to pay the old hands to drink his health. The French regulars, 1300 strong, were all new to the West, and, as they formed nearly half of Montcalm's little army, the 'baptism' of so many new-comers caused a great deal of jollity in camp that night. Serious work was, however, ahead. Fort Frontenac was reached on the

29th; and here the report that Villiers, with the advance guard, had already taken from the British 200 canoes and 300 prisoners soon flew round and raised the men's spirits to the highest pitch.

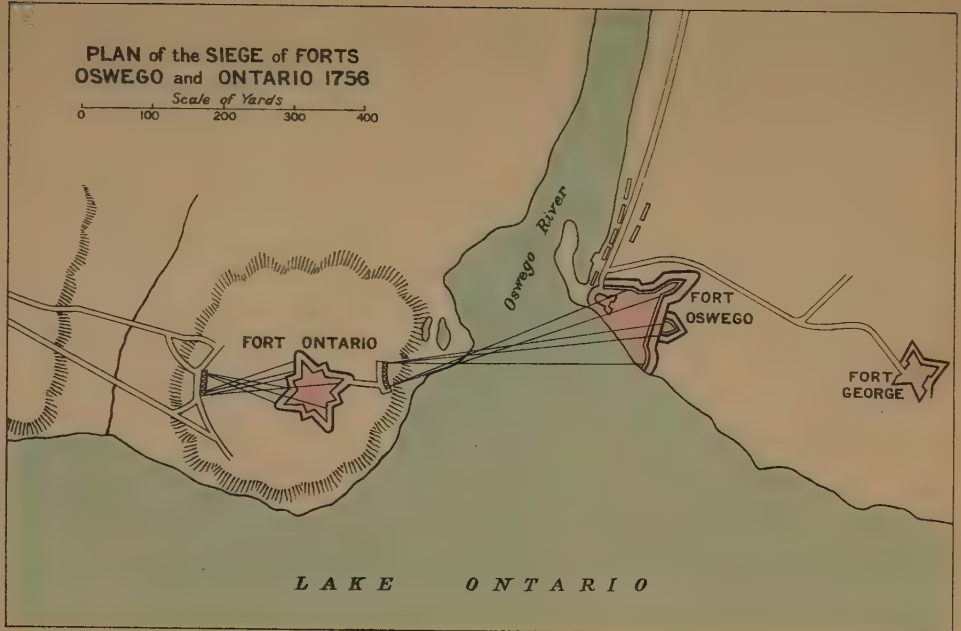
Montcalm at once sent out two armed ships, with twenty-eight cannon between them, to cut off Oswego by water, while he sent a picked body of Canadians and Indians into the woods on the south shore to cut the place off by land. There was no time to lose, since the British were, on the whole, much stronger, and might make up their slow minds to send an army to the rescue. Montcalm lost not a moment. He sailed across the lake with his 3000 men and all his guns and stores, and landed at Sackett's Harbour, which his advance guard had already seized and prepared. Then, hiding in the mouths of rivers by day and marching and rowing by night, his army arrived safely within cannon-shot of Oswego under cover of the dark on August 10.

There were three forts at the mouth of the Oswego. The first was Fort Ontario; then, across the river, stood Fort Oswego; and, beyond that again, little Fort George. These forts were held by about 1800 British, mostly

American colonists, with 123 guns of all kinds.

While it was still dark Montcalm gave out his orders. At the first streak of dawn the Indians and Canadians were in position to protect the engineers and working parties. Only one accident marred the success of the opening day. One of the French engineers was returning to camp through the woods at dusk, when an Indian, mistaking him for an enemy, shot him dead. It is said that this Indian felt so sorry for what he had done that he vowed to avenge the engineer's loss on the British, and did not stop scalp-hunting during the rest of the war; but went on until he had lifted as many as thirty scalps from the hated British heads. In the meantime, other engineers had traced out the road from the bay to the battery. Led by their officers the French regulars set to work with such good-will that the road was ready next day for the siege train of twenty-two cannon, now landed in the nick of time.

Every part of the siege was made to fit in perfectly with every other part. While the guns were being landed, the British, who had only just taken alarm, sent round two armed vessels to stop this work. But Montcalm had


PLAN of the SIEGE of FORTS
OSWEGO and ONTARIO 1756
Scale of Yards
0
100
200
300
400
Oswego River
FORT ONTARIO
FORT OSWEGO
FORT GEORGE
LAKE ONTARIO
Bartholomew, Edin.

placed a battery all ready to beat off an attack, and the landing went on like clockwork. The next day, again, the soldiers were as busy as bees round the doomed British forts. Canadians and Indians filled the woods. Canadians and French hauled the cannon up to the battery commanding Fort Ontario, but left them hidden near by till after dark. The engineers made the first parallel. French troops raised the battery; and at daylight the next morning it was ready. Fort Ontario kept up an active fire, at a distance of only a musket shot, two hundred yards; but the French fire was so furious that the British guns were silenced the same afternoon.

Colonel Mercer, the British commander, called in the garrison, who abandoned Fort Ontario and crossed the river after spiking the guns. Without a moment's delay Montcalm seized the fort and kept his working parties hauling guns all night long. In the morning Fort Oswego on the other side of the river was commanded by a heavier battery than the one that had taken Fort Ontario the day before. More than this, the Canadians and Indians had crossed the river and had cut off the little Fort George, half a mile beyond. There was a stiff fight for it, but Mercer's men

were driven off into the other fort with considerable loss.

Montcalm's new battery beside the river was on higher ground than Fort Oswego, which was only five hundred yards away. At six o'clock it opened fire and ploughed up the whole area of the fort with terrible effect. Hardly a spot was left which the French shells did not search out. The British reply, fired uphill, soon began to falter. The French fire was redoubled. Colonel Mercer was killed by a cannon ball, and this, of course, weakened the British defence. The second-in-command kept up the unequal fight for another couple of hours. Then, finding that he could not induce his men to face the murderous fire any longer, and seeing his fort cut off by land and water, he ran up the white flag.

Montcalm gave him an hour to surrender both fort and garrison. Again there was no time to lose, and again Montcalm lost none. That morning a letter found on a British messenger showed that Colonel Webb, with 2000 men, was somewhere up the river Oswego waiting for news. So, while Montcalm was attacking the fort with his batteries, he was also preparing his army to attack Webb. He

did not intend to wait; but to march out and meet the new enemy, so as not to be caught between two fires.

At eleven the fort surrendered with 1600 prisoners, 123 cannon, powder, shot, stores and provisions of all kinds, 5 armed ships and 200 boats. There was also a large quantity of wine and rum, which Montcalm at once spilt into the lake, lest the Indians should get hold of it and in their drunken frenzy begin a massacre. As it was, they were anything but pleased to find that he was conducting the war on European principles, and that he would not let them scalp the sick and wounded British. Some of them sneaked in and, in the first confusion, took a few scalps. But Montcalm was among them at once and stopped them short. He had been warned not to offend them; and so he promised them rich presents if they would behave properly. In his dispatch to the minister of War he said: 'I am afraid my promises will cost ten thousand francs; but the keeping of them will attach the Indians more to our side. In any case, there is nothing I would not have done to prevent any breach of faith with the enemy.'

In a single week every part of all three forts was levelled with the ground. This delighted

the Indians more than anything else, for they rightly feared that any British advance in this direction would be sure to end in their being driven out of their own country. By August 21, ten days from the time the first shot was fired, Montcalm was leading his victorious army back to Montreal.

The news spread like wildfire. No such sudden, complete, and surprising victory had ever before been won in the West. The name and fame of Montcalm ran along the war-paths of the endless forest and passed from mouth to mouth over ten thousand leagues of inland waters. In one short summer the magic of that single word, Montcalm, became as great in America as it had been for centuries in France. The whole face of the war was changed. At the beginning of the year the British had thought of nothing but attack. Then, when Montcalm had shown them so bold a front at Ticonderoga, they had paused to make sure. Now, after Oswego, they thought of nothing but defence.

People could hardly believe that one and the same man had in July checked the threatened British invasion at Lake Champlain and in August had taken the stronghold of British power on Lake Ontario. Every step of the

way had to be covered by force of the men's own legs and arms, marching, paddling, hauling, carrying. In short, Montcalm had moved a whole army, siege train and all, as fast through the wilderness without horses as another army would have been moved over good roads in Europe with them. The wonder grew when the numbers became known. With 3000 men and 22 guns Montcalm had taken three forts with a garrison of 1800 men and 123 guns; and had done this in face of five armed British vessels against his own two, and in spite of the fact that 2000 more British soldiers were close behind him in the forest.

Canada burst into great rejoicings. All the churches sang *Te Deum*. The five captured flags were carried in triumph through Montreal, Three Rivers, and Quebec. In France the news was received with great jubilation, and many of Montcalm's officers gained promotion. In the midst of all this glory Montcalm was busy looking after the health and comfort of his men, seeing that the Canadians were sent home as soon as possible to gather in their harvest, and engaging the Indians to join him for a still greater war next year. Nor did he forget any one who had done him faithful service. He asked, as a special favour, that an old sergeant,

Marcel, who had come out as his orderly and clerk, should be made a captain. Marcel had thus good reason never to forget Montcalm. It was his hand that wrote the last letter which Montcalm ever dictated and signed, the one to the British commander after the battle of the Plains, the one which admitted the ultimate failure of all Montcalm's heroic work.

Another man whom Montcalm specially praised was Bougainville, his aide-de-camp, of whom we shall hear again very often. Bougainville, though still under thirty, was already a well-known man of science who had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. 'You could hardly believe how full of resource he is,' wrote the admiring Montcalm, who then added modestly: 'As the account of this expedition may be printed I have asked him to correct it carefully, because he writes much better than I do.'

Only one thing spoiled the triumph; and that was the jealousy of Vaudreuil, who tried to claim all the credit of making the plan for himself and the credit of carrying it out for the Canadians. Certainly he had been saying for some time before Montcalm arrived that Oswego ought to be taken. Everybody on both sides knew perfectly well, however, that

Oswego was the gateway of the West; so Vaudreuil was not a bit wiser than many others. In a way he did make the plan. But Montcalm was the one who really worked it out. Vaudreuil pressed the button that launched the ship. It was Montcalm who took her into action and brought her out victorious.

Montcalm's crew worked well together. But this did not suit Vaudreuil at all. He wrote both to the minister of War and to the minister of Marine in France, praising the Canadians and Indians and making as little as possible of the work of the French. 'The French regulars showed their wonted zeal; but the enemy did not give them a chance to do much work.' 'Our troops, the Canadians and Indians, fought with courage. They have all done very well.' True enough. But, all the same, the regulars were, from first to last, the backbone of the defence of Canada. 'The measures I took made our victory certain. If I had been less firm, Oswego would still have been in the hands of the British. I cannot sufficiently congratulate myself on the zeal which my brother [an officer in the Canadian service] and the Canadians and Indians showed. Without them my orders

would have been given in vain.' And so on, and so on.

Montcalm saw the real strength and weakness of the Canadians and wrote his own opinion to the minister of War. 'Our French regulars did all I required with splendid zeal. . . . I made good use of the militia, but not at the works exposed to the enemy's fire. These militiamen have no discipline. In six months I could make grenadiers of them. But at present I would not rely on them, nor believe what they say about themselves; for they think themselves quite the finest fellows in the world. The governor is a native of Canada, was married here, and is surrounded by his relatives on all sides.'

The fact is that the war was no longer an affair of little raids, first on one side and then on the other, but was becoming, more and more, a war on a great scale, with long campaigns, larger numbers of men, trains of artillery, fortifications, and all the other things that require well-drilled troops who have thoroughly learned the soldier's duty, and are ready to do it at any time and in any place. War is like everything else in the world. The men whose regular business it is will wage it better than the men who only do it as an odd

job. Of course, if the best men are chosen for the militia, and the worst are turned into regulars, the militia may beat the regulars, even on equal terms. If, too, regulars are set down in a strange country, quite unlike the one in which they have been trained to fight, naturally they will begin by making a good many mistakes. But, for all-round work, the same men, as regulars, are worth much more than twice what they are worth as militia, everywhere and always.

CHAPTER IV

FORT WILLIAM HENRY

1757

In January Montcalm paid a visit to Quebec, and there began to see how Bigot and his fellow-vampires were sucking away the life-blood of Canada. 'The intendant lives in grandeur, and has given two splendid balls, where I have seen over eighty very charming and well-dressed ladies. I think Quebec is a town of very good style, and I do not believe we have a dozen cities in France that could rank before it as a social centre.' This was well enough; though not when armies were only half-fed. But here is the real crime: 'The intendant's strong taste for gambling, and the governor's weakness in letting him have his own way, are causing a great deal of play for very high stakes. Many officers will repent it soon and bitterly.' Montcalm was placed in a most awkward position. He wished to stop the ruinous gambling. But he

was under Vaudreuil, had no power over the intendant, and, as he said himself, 'felt obliged not to oppose either of them in public, because they were invested with the king's authority.'

Vaudreuil nearly did Canada a very good turn this winter, by falling ill on his way to Montreal. But, luckily for the British and unluckily for the French, he recovered. On February 14 he began hatching more mischief. The British, having been stopped in the West at Oswego, were certain to try another advance, in greater force, by the centre, up Lake Champlain. The French, with fewer men and very much less provisions and stores of all kinds, could hope to win only by giving the British another sudden, smashing blow and then keeping them in check for the rest of the summer. The whole strength of Canada was needed to give this blow, and every pound of food was precious. Vaudreuil, however, was planning to take separate action on his own account. He organized a raid under his brother, Rigaud, without telling Montcalm a word about it till the whole plan was made, even though the raid required the use of some of the French regulars, who were, in an especial degree, under Montcalm's command.

Montcalm told Vaudreuil that it was a pity not to keep their whole strength for one decisive dash, and that, if this raid was to take place at all, Lévis or some other regular French officer high in rank should be in command.

Vaudreuil, however, adhered to his own plan. This time there was to be no question of credit for anyone but Canadians, Indians, Vaudreuil himself, and his brother. As for making sure of victory by taking, as Montcalm advised, a really strong force: well, Vaudreuil would trust to luck, hit or miss, as he always had trusted before. And a strange stroke of luck very nearly did serve his unworthy turn. For, on March 17, when the 1600 raiders were drawing quite close to Fort William Henry, most of the little British garrison of 400 men were drinking so much New England rum in honour of St Patrick's Day that their muskets would have hurt friends more than foes if an attack had been made that night. Next evening the French crept up, hoping to surprise the place. But the sentries were once more alert. Through the silence they heard a tapping noise on the lake, which turned out to be made by a Canadian who was trying the strength of the ice with the back of his axe to see if it would bear. This led to a brisk defence. When

the French advanced over the ice the British gunners sent such a hail of grape-shot crashing along this precarious foothold that the enemy were glad to scamper off as hard as their legs would take them.

The French did not abandon their attempt, however, and two days later Vaudreuil's brother arrayed his 1600 men against the fort and summoned it to surrender. As he had no guns the garrison would not listen to him. Rigaud then proceeded to burn what he could outside the fort. He certainly made a splendid bonfire; the wild, red flames leaped into the sky from the open, snow-white clearings beside the fort, with the long, white reaches of Lake George in front and the dark, densely wooded hills all round. A great deal was burnt: four small ships, 350 boats, a saw-mill, sheds, magazines, immense piles of fire-wood, and a large supply of provisions. But the British could afford this loss much better than the French could afford the cost of the raid. And the cost, of course, was five times as great as it ought to have been. Bigot's gang took care of that.

Then the raiders, unable to take the fort, set out for home on snow-shoes. There had been a very heavy snowstorm before they

started, and the spring sun was now shining full on the glaring white snow. Many of them, even among the Canadians and Indians, were struck snowblind so badly that they had to be led by the hand—no easy thing on snow-shoes. At the end of March they were safely back in Montreal, where Vaudreuil and his brother went strutting about like a pair of turkey-cocks.

Montcalm's first Canadian winter wore away. Vaudreuil and Bigot still kept up an outward politeness in all their relations with him. But they were beginning to fear that he was far too wise and honest for them. He was, however, under Vaudreuil's foolish orders and he had no power to check Bigot's knaveries. Much against his will he was already getting into debt, and was thus rendered even more helpless. Vaudreuil, as governor, had plenty of money. Bigot stole as much as he wished. But Montcalm was not well paid. Yet, as the commander-in-chief, he had to be asking people to dinners and receptions almost every day, while becoming less and less able to meet the expense. The Bigot gang made provisions so scarce and so dear that only the thieves themselves could pay for them. Well might the sorely tried general write home: 'What a

country, where knaves grow rich and honest men are ruined!'

In June there was such a sight in Montreal as Canada had never seen before, and never saw again. During the autumn, the winter, and the spring, messengers had been going along every warpath and waterway, east and west for thousands of miles, to summon the tribes to meet Onontio, as they called the French governor, at Montreal. The ice had hardly gone in April when the first of the braves began to arrive in flotillas of bark canoes. The surrender of Washington at Fort Necessity and the capture and rebuilding of Fort Duquesne in 1754, the bloody defeat of Braddock in 1755, and Montcalm's sudden, smashing blow against Oswego in 1756, all had led the western Indians to think that the French were everything and the British nothing. In Canada itself the Indians were equally sure that the French were going to be the victors there; while in the east, in far Acadia, the Abnakis were as bitter as the Acadians themselves against the British. So now, whether eager for more victories or thirsting for revenge, the warriors came to Montreal from far and near.

Fifty-one of the tribes were ready for the

warpath. Their chiefs had sat in grave debate round the council fires. Their medicine men had made charms in secret wigwams and seen visions of countless British scalps and piles of British booty. Accordingly, when the braves of these fifty-one tribes met at Montreal, there was war in every heart among them. No town in the world had ever shown more startling contrasts in its streets. Here, side by side, were outward signs of the highest civilization and of the lowest barbarism. Here were the most refined of ladies, dressed in the latest Paris fashions, mincing about in silks and satins and high-heeled, golden-buckled shoes. Here were the most courtly gentlemen of Europe, in the same embroidered and be-ruffled uniforms that they would have worn before the king of France. Yet in and out of this gay throng of polite society went hundreds of copper-coloured braves; some of them more than half-naked; most of them ready, after a victory, to be cannibals who revelled in stews of white man's flesh; all of them decked in waving plumes, all of them grotesquely painted, like demons in a night-mare, and all of them armed to the teeth.

Much to Vaudreuil's disgust the man whom the Indians wished most to see was not him-

self, the 'Great Onontio,' much less Bigot, prince of thieves, but the warrior chief, Montcalm. They had the good sense to prefer the lion to the owl or the fox. Three hundred of the wildest Ottawas came striding in one day, each man a model of agility and strength, a living bronze, a sculptor's dream, the whole making a picture for the brush of the greatest painter. 'We want to see the chief who tramples the British to death and sweeps their forts off the face of the earth.' Montcalm, though every inch a soldier, was rather short than tall; and at first the Ottawa chief looked surprised. 'We thought your head would be lost in the clouds,' he said. But then, as he caught Montcalm's piercing glance, he added: 'Yet when we look into your eyes, we see the height of the pine and the wings of the eagle.'

Meanwhile, prisoners, scouts, and spies had been coming in; so too had confidential dispatches from France confirming the rumours that the greater part of the British army was to attack Louisbourg, and that the French were well able to defend it. With the British concentrating their strength on Louisbourg a chance offered for another Oswego-like blow against the British forts at the southern end of Lake George if it could be made by July.

But Vaudreuil's raid in March, and Bigot's bill for it, had eaten up so much of the supplies and money, that nothing like a large force could be made ready to strike before August; and the month's delay might give the militia of the British colonies, slow as they were, time to be brought up to the help of the forts.

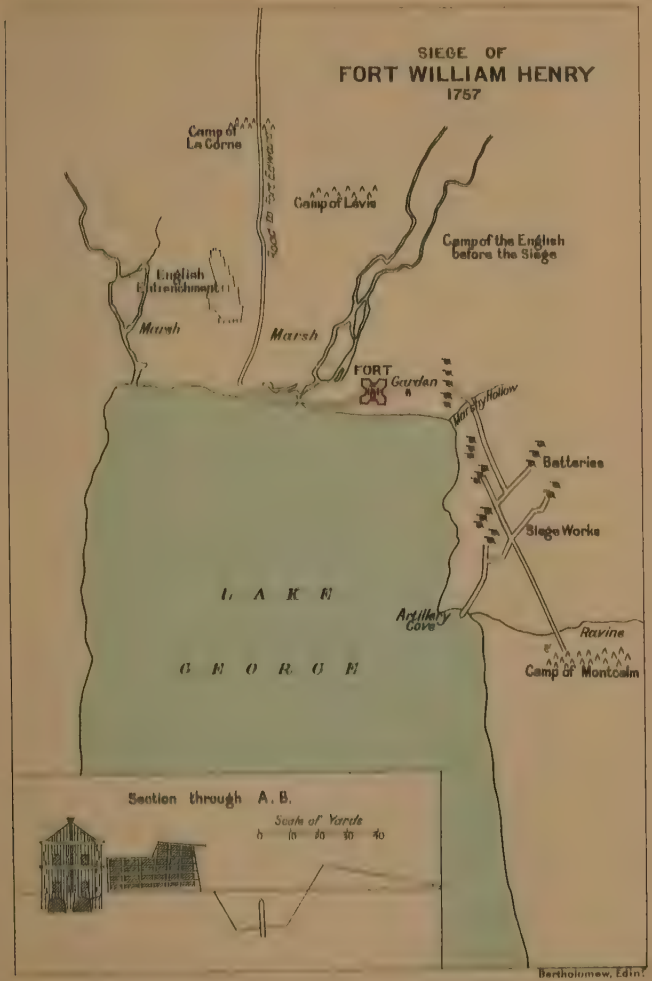
Montcalm was now eager to strike the blow. Once clear of Montreal and its gang of parasites, he soon had his motley army in hand, in spite of all kinds of difficulties. In May Bourlamaque had begun rebuilding Ticonderoga. In July Lake Champlain began to swarm with boats, canoes, and sailing vessels, all moving south towards the doomed fort on Lake George. Montcalm's whole force numbered 8000. Of these 3000 were regulars, 3000 were militia, and 2000 were Indians from the fifty-one different tribes, very few of whom knew anything of war, except war as it was carried on by savages. By the end of the month these 8000 men were camped along the four miles of valley between Lakes Champlain and George. Meanwhile the British were at the other end of Lake George, little more than thirty miles away. Their first post was Fort William Henry, where they had 2200 men under Colonel Monro. Fourteen miles inland beyond that

was Fort Edward, where Webb commanded 3600 men. There were 900 more British troops still farther on, but well within call, and it was known that a large force of militia were being assembled somewhere near Albany. Thus Montcalm knew that the British already had nearly as many men as his own regulars and militia put together, and that further levies of militia might come on at any time and in any numbers. He therefore had to strike as hard and fast as he could, and then retire on Ticonderoga. He knew the Indians would go home at once after the fight and also that he must send the Canadians home in August to save their harvest. Then he would be left with only 3000 regulars, who could not be fed for the rest of the summer so far from headquarters. With this 3000 he could not advance, in any case, because of lack of food and because of the presence of Webb's 4500, increased by an unknown number of American militia.

The first skirmish on Lake George was fought while the main bodies of both armies were still at opposite ends. A party of 400 Indians and 50 Canadians were paddling south when they saw advancing on the lake a number of British boats with 300 men, mostly raw

militia from New Jersey. The Indians went ashore and hid. The doomed militiamen rowed on in careless, straggling disorder. Suddenly, as they passed a wooded point, the calm air was rent with blood-curdling war-whoops, and the lake seemed alive with red-skinned fiends, who paddled in among the British boats in one bewildering moment. The militiamen were seized with a panic and tried to escape. But they could not get away from the finest paddlers in the world, who cut them off, upset their boats, tomahawked some, and speared a good many others like fish in the water. Only two boats, out of twenty-three, escaped to tell the tale. That night the forest resounded with savage yells of triumph as the prisoners, out of reach of all help from either army, were killed and scalped to the last man.

On August 1 Montcalm advanced by land and water. He sent Lévis by land with 3000 men to cut Fort William Henry off from Fort Edward, while he went himself, with the rest of his army, by water in boats and canoes. The next day they met at a little bay quite close to the fort. On the 3rd the final advance was made. The French canoes formed lines stretching right across the lake.


SIEGE OF
FORT WILLIAM HENRY
1757
Camp of La Corne
Road to Fort Edward
Camp of Lévis
Camp of the English before the Siege
English Entrenchments
Marsh
Marsh
FORT
Garden
Burnt Hollow
Batteries
Siege Works
L A K E
G E O R G E
Artillery Cove
Ravine
Camp of Montcalm
Section through A. B.
Scale of Yards
0 10 20 30 40
Bartholomew, Edin.

While the artillery was being landed in a cove out of reach of the guns of the fort Lévis was having a lively skirmish with the British, who were trying to drive in their cattle and save their tents. About 500 of them held the fort, and 1700 were in the entrenched camp some way beyond.

Montcalm sent in a summons to surrender. But old Colonel Monro replied that he was ready to fight. On the 4th and 5th the French batteries rose as if by magic. But the Indians, not used to the delay and the careful preparation which a siege involves, soon grew angry and impatient, and swarmed all over the French lines, asking why they were ordered here and there and treated like slaves, why their advice had not been sought, and why the big guns were not being fired. Montcalm had been counselled to humour them as much as possible and on no account whatever to offend them. Their help was needed, and the British were quite ready to win them over to their own side if possible. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 5th, Montcalm held a grand 'pow-wow' with the savages. He told them that the French had to be slow at first, but that the very next day the big guns would begin to fire, and that they would all be in the

fight together. The fort was timbered and made a good target. The Indians greeted the first roar of the siege guns with yells of delight, and when they saw shells bursting and scattering earth and timbers in all directions they shrieked and whooped so loudly that their savage voices woke almost as many wild echoes along those beautiful shores as the thunder of the guns themselves.

Presently a man came in to the French camp with a letter addressed to Monro, which the Indians had found concealed in a hollow bullet on a British messenger whom they had killed. This letter was from Monro's superior officer, General Webb, fourteen miles distant at Fort Edward. He advised Monro to make the best terms possible with Montcalm, as he did not feel strong enough to relieve Fort William Henry. Montcalm stopped his batteries and sent the letter in to Monro by Bougainville, with his compliments. But Monro, while thanking him for his courtesy, still said he should hold out to the last.

Montcalm now decided to bring matters to a head at once. As yet his batteries were too far off to be effective, and between them and the fort lay first a marsh and then a little hill. By sheer hard work the French made a road

for their cannon across the marsh ; and Monro saw, to his horror, that Montcalm's new batteries were rising, in spite of the British fire, right opposite the fort, on top of the little hill, and only two hundred and fifty yards away.

Monro knew he was lost. Smallpox was raging in the fort. Webb would not move. Montcalm was able to knock the whole place to pieces and destroy the garrison. On the 9th the white flag went up. Montcalm granted the honours of war. The British were to march off the next morning to Fort Edward, carrying their arms, and under escort of a body of French regulars. Every precaution was taken to keep the Indians from committing any outrage. Montcalm assembled them, told them the terms, and persuaded them to promise obedience. He took care to keep all strong drink out of their way, and asked Monro to destroy all the liquor in the British fort and camp.

In spite of these precautions a dire tragedy followed. While the garrison were marching out of the fort towards their own camp, some Indians climbed in without being seen and began to scalp the sick and wounded who were left behind in charge of the French. The French guard, hearing cries, rushed in and

stopped the savages by force. The British were partly to blame for this first outrage: they had not poured out the rum, and the Indians had stolen enough to make them drunk. Montcalm came down himself, at the first alarm, and did his utmost. He seized and destroyed all the liquor; and he arranged with two chiefs from each tribe to be ready to start in the morning with the armed British and their armed escort. He went back to his tent only at nine o'clock, when everything was quiet.

Much worse things happened the next morning. The British, who had some women and children with them, and who still kept a good deal of rum in their canteens, began to stir much earlier than had been arranged. The French escort had not arrived when the British column began to straggle out on the road to Fort Edward. When the march began the scattered column was two or three times as long as it ought to have been. Meanwhile a savage enemy was on the alert. Before daylight the Abnakis of Acadia, who hated the British most of all, had slunk off unseen to prepare an ambush for the first stragglers they could find. Other Indians, who had appeared later, had begged for rum from the British, who

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had given it in the hope that, in this way, they might be got rid of. Suddenly, a war-whoop was raised, a wild rush on the British followed, and a savage massacre began. The British column, long and straggling already, broke up, and the French escort could defend only those who kept together. At the first news Montcalm ordered out another guard, and himself rushed with all his staff officers to the scene of outrage. They ran every risk to save their prisoners from massacre. Several French officers and soldiers were wounded by the savages, and all did their best. The Canadians, on the other hand, more hardened to Indian ways, simply looked on at the wild scene. Most of the British were rescued and were taken safely to Fort Edward. The French fired cannon from Fort William Henry to guide fugitives back. Those not massacred at once, but made prisoners by the Indians in the woods, were in nearly all cases ransomed by Vaudreuil, who afterwards sent them to Halifax in a French ship.

Such was the 'massacre of Fort William Henry,' about which people took opposite views at the time, as they do still. It is quite clear that, in the first instance, Montcalm did almost everything that any man in his place

could possibly do to protect his captives from the Indians. It is also clear that he did everything possible during and after the massacre, even to risking his life and the lives of his officers and men. He might, indeed, have turned out all his French regulars to guard the captive column from the first. But there were only 2500 of these regulars, not many more than the British, who were armed, who ought to have poured out every drop of rum the night before, and who ought to have started only at the proper time and in proper order. There were faults on both sides, as there usually are. But, except for not having the whole of his regulars ready at the spot, which did not seem necessary the night before, Montcalm stands quite clear of all blame as a general. His efforts to stop the bloody work—and they were successful efforts involving danger to himself—clear him of all blame as a man.

The number of persons massacred has been given by some few British and American writers as amounting to 1500. Most people know now that this is nonsense. All but about a hundred of the losses on the British side are accounted for otherwise, under the heading of those who were either killed in battle, or died of sickness, or were given up

at Fort Edward, or were sent back by way of Halifax. It is simply impossible that more than a hundred were massacred.

Still, a massacre is a massacre; all sorts of evil are sure to come of it; and this one was no exception to the rule. It blackened unjustly the good name of Montcalm. It led to an intensely bitter hate of the British against the Canadians, many of whom were given no quarter afterwards. It caused the British to break the terms of surrender, which required the prisoners not to fight again for the next eighteen months. Most of all, the massacre hurt the Indians, guilty and innocent alike. Many of them took scalps from men who had smallpox; and so they carried this dread disease throughout the wilderness, where it killed fifty times as many of their own people as they had killed on the British side.

The massacre at Fort William Henry raises the whole vexed question of the rights of the savages and of their means of defence. The Indians naturally wished to live in their own country in their own way—as other people do. They did not like the whites to push them aside—who does like being pushed aside? But, if they had to choose between different nations of whites, they naturally chose the ones

who changed their country the least. Now, the British colonists were aggressive and numerous; and they were always taking more and more land from the Indians, in one way or another. The French, on the other hand, were few, they wanted less of the land, for they were more inclined to trade than to farm, and in general they managed to get on with the Indians better. Therefore most of the Indians took sides with the French; and therefore most of the scalps lifted were British scalps. The question of the barbarity of Indian warfare remains. The Indians were in fact living the same sort of barbarous life that the ancestors of the French and British had lived two or three thousand years earlier. So the Indians did, of course, just what the French and the British would have done at a corresponding age. Peoples take centuries to grow into civilized nations; and it is absurd to expect savages to change more in a hundred years than Europeans changed in a thousand.

We need hardly inquire which side was the more right and which the more wrong in respect to these barbarities. The fact is, there were plenty of rights and wrongs all round. Each side excused itself and accused the other. The pot has always called the kettle black.

Both the French and the British made use of Indians when the savages themselves would gladly have remained neutral. In contrast with the colonial levies the French and British regulars, trained in European discipline, were less inclined to 'act the Indian'; but both did so on occasion. The French regulars did a little scalping on their own account now and then; the Canadian regulars did more than a little; while the Canadian militiamen, roughened by their many raids, did a great deal. The first thing Wolfe's regulars did at Louisbourg was to scalp an Indian chief. The American rangers were scalpers when their blood was up and when nobody stopped them. They scalped under Wolfe at Quebec. They scalped whites as well as Indians at Baie St Paul, at St Joachim, and elsewhere. Even Washington was a party to such practices. When sending in a batch of Indian scalps for the usual reward offered by Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia he asked that an extra one might be paid for at the usual rate, 'although it is not an Indian's.' It is thus clear that the barbarities were in effect a normal feature of warfare in the wilderness.

A week after its surrender Fort William Henry had been wiped off the face of the

earth, as Oswego had been the year before, and Montcalm's army had set out homeward bound. But he was sick at heart. Vaudreuil had been behaving worse than ever. He had written and ordered Montcalm to push on and take Fort Edward at once. Yet, as we have seen, the Indians had melted away, the Canadians had gone home for the harvest, only 3000 regulars were left, and these could not be kept a month longer in the field for lack of food. In spite of this, Vaudreuil thought Montcalm ought to advance into British territory, besiege a larger army than his own, and beat it in spite of all the British militia that were coming to its aid.

Even before leaving for the front Montcalm had written to France asking to be recalled from Canada. In this letter to the minister of Marine he spoke very freely. He pointed out that if Vaudreuil had died in the winter the new governor would have been Rigaud, Vaudreuil's brother. What this would have meant every one knew only too well; for Rigaud was a still bigger fool than Vaudreuil himself. Montcalm gave the Canadians their due. 'What a people, when called upon! They have talent and courage enough, but nobody has called these qualities forth.' In

fact, the wretched Canadian was bullied and also flattered by Vaudreuil, robbed by Bigot, bothered on his farm by all kinds of foolish regulations, and then expected to be a model subject and soldier. How could he be considered a soldier when he had never been anything but a mere raider, not properly trained, not properly armed, not properly fed, and not paid at all ?

While Montcalm was writing the truth Vaudreuil was writing lie after lie about Montcalm, in order to do him all the harm he could. Busy tell-tales repeated and twisted every impatient word Montcalm spoke, and altogether Canada was at sixes and sevens. Vaudreuil, sitting comfortably at his desk and eating three good meals a day, had written to Montcalm saying that there would be no trouble about provisions if Fort Edward was attacked. Yet, at this very time, he had given orders that, because of scarcity, the Canadians at home should not have more than a quarter of a pound of bread a day. Canada was drawing very near a famine, though its soil could grow some of the finest crops in the world. But what can any country do under knaves and fools, especially when it is gagged as well as robbed ? Montcalm's complaints did not

always reach the minister of Marine, who was the special person in France to look after Canada; for the minister's own right-hand man was one of the Bigot gang and knew how to steal a letter as well as a shipload of stores.

To outward view, and especially in the eyes of the British Americans, 1757 was a year of nothing but triumph for the French in America. They had made Louisbourg safer than ever; the British fleet and army had not even dared to attack it. French power had never been so widespread. The fleurs-de-lis floated over the whole of the valleys of the St Lawrence, Ohio, and Mississippi, as well as over the Great Lakes, where these three valleys meet. But this great show of strength depended on the army of Montcalm—that motley host behind whose dauntless front everything was hollow and rotten to the last degree. The time was soon to come when even the bravest of armies could no longer stand against lions in front and jackals behind.

CHAPTER V

TICONDEROGA

1758

MONTCALM'S second winter in Canada was worse than his first. Vaudreuil, Bigot, and all the men in the upper circles of what would nowadays be the business, the political, and the official world, lived on the fat of the land; but the rest only on what fragments were left. In our meaning of the word 'business' there was in reality no business at all. There were then no real merchants in Canada, no real tradesmen, no bankers, no shippers, no honest men of affairs at all. Everything was done by or under the government, and the government was controlled by or under the Bigot gang. This gang stole a great deal of what was found in Canada, and most of what came out from France as well. In consequence, supplies became scarcer and scarcer and dearer and dearer; and the worst of it was that the gang wished things to be scarce and dear,

so that more stores and money might be sent out from France and stolen on arrival. For France, in spite of all her faults in governing, helped Canada, and helped her generously. It seems too terrible for belief, but it is true that the parasites in Canada did their best on this account to keep the people half starved. Montcalm saw through the scheme, but complaint was almost useless, for many of his letters were stopped before they reached the head men in France. To cap all, the wretched army was no longer paid in gold, which always has its own fixed value, but in paper bills which had no real money to back them, as bank-notes have to-day. The result was that this money was accepted at much less than its face value, and that every officer who had to support himself, as he must when not campaigning, fell into debt, Montcalm, of course, more than the others. 'What a country,' to repeat his words, 'where knaves grow rich and honest men are ruined!'

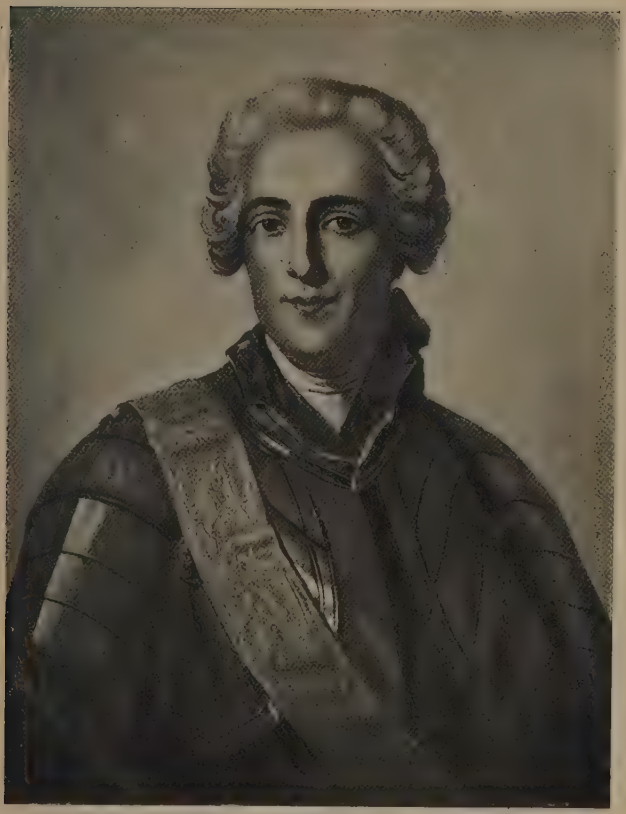
As the winter wore away food grew scarcer —except for those who belonged to the gang. Soldiers were allowed about a pound of meat a day. This would have been luxury if the meat had been good, and if they had had anything else to eat with it. But a pound of

bad beef, or of scraggy horse-flesh, or sometimes even of flabby salt cod-fish, with a quarter of a pound of bread, and nothing else but a little Indian corn, is not a good ration for an army. The Canadians were worse off still. In the spring the bread ration was halved again, and became only a couple of ounces. Two thousand Acadians had escaped from the British efforts to deport them, and had reached the St Lawrence region. Their needs increased the misery, for they could not yet grow as much as they ate, even if they had had a fair chance.

At last the poor, patient, down-trodden Canadians began to grumble. One day a crowd of angry women threw their horse-flesh at Vaudreuil's door. Another day even the grenadiers refused to eat their rations. Then Montcalm's second-in-command, Lévis, who ate horse-flesh himself, for the sake of example, told them that Canada was now like a besieged fortress and that the garrison would have to put up with hardships. At once the pride of the soldier came out. Next day they brought him some roast horse, better cooked and served than his own. He gave each grenadier a gold coin to drink the king's health ; and the trouble ended.

The Canadians and Indians made two successful raids. One was against a place near Schenectady, where they destroyed many stores and provisions. The other ended in a fight with the British guerilla leader Rogers and his rangers, who were badly cut up near Ticonderoga. The Canadians were at their best in making raids. Yet now raids hardly counted any longer, for the war had outgrown them. Larger and larger armies were taking the field, and these armies had artillery, engineers, and transport on a greater scale. The mere raider, or odd-job soldier, though always good in his own place and in his own kind of country, was becoming less and less important compared with the regular. The larger an army the more the difference of value widens between regulars and militia. In great wars men must be trained to act together at any time, in any place, and in any numbers; and this is only possible with those all-the-year-round soldiers who are either regulars already or who, though militia to start with, become by practice the same as regulars.

When Montcalm looked forward to the campaign of 1758, he saw in what a desperate plight he was. The wild, unstable Indians were



LÉVIS

From the painting in the Versailles Gallery

the weakest element. Gladly would he have done without them altogether. But some were always needed as scouts and guides; and, in any case, it was a good thing to employ them so as to keep them from joining the enemy. The trouble was that they were already beginning to fail him. Some of the ships with goods for the Indians were captured by the British fleet. Those that arrived were in as real a sense captured, for they were stolen by the Bigot gang, and did not fulfil the purpose of holding the Indian allies. 'If,' said Montcalm, in one of his despairing letters to the minister, 'if all the presents that the king sends out to the Indians were really given to them, we should have every tribe in America on our own side.'

The Canadians were robbed even more; and they and the Canadian regulars were set against Montcalm and the French by every lie that Vaudreuil could speak in Canada or write to France. The wonder is, not that the French Canadians of those dreadful days did badly now and then, but that they did so well on the whole; that they were so brave, so loyal, so patient, so hopeful, so true to many of the best traditions of their race. One other feature of their system must be noted—the

influence of their priests. Protestants would think them too much under the thumb of the priests. But, however this may have been, it can be said with truth that the church and the native soldiers, with all their faults, were the glory of Canada, while the government was nothing but its shame. The priests stood by their people like men, suffered hardship with them, and helped them to face every trial of fortune against false friends and open foes alike.

The mainstay of the defence of Canada was, however, the disciplined strength of the French regulars. There were eight battalions, belonging to seven regiments whose names deserve to be held in honour wherever the fight for Canada is known : La Reine, Guienne, Béarn, Languedoc, La Sarre, Royal Roussillon, and Berry. Each battalion had about 500 fighting men, making about 4000 in all. About 2000 more men were sent out to Quebec to fill up gaps at different times ; so that, one way and another, at least 6000 French soldiers reached Canada between 1755 and 1759. Yet, when Lévis laid down the arms of France in Canada for ever in 1760, only 2000 of all these remained. About 1000 had been taken prisoner on sea or land. A few had deserted.

But almost 3000 had been lost by sickness or in battle. How many armies have a record of sacrifices greater than these, and against foes behind as well as in front ?

From the very first these gallant men showed their mettle. They were not forced to go to Canada. They went willingly. When the first four battalions went, the general who had to arrange their departure was afraid he might have trouble in filling the gaps by getting men to volunteer from the other battalions of the same regiments. But no. He could have filled every gap ten times over. It was the same with the officers. Every one was eager to fight for the honour of France in Canada. One officer actually offered his whole fortune to another, in hopes of getting this other's place for service in Canada. But in vain. France had parasites at court, plenty of them. But the French troops who went out were patriots almost to a man. The only exception was in the case we have noticed before, when 400 riff-raff were sent out to take the places of the 400 good men whom Boscawen had captured in the Gulf during the summer of 1755.

The year 1758 saw the tide turn against France. Pitt was now at the head of the war

in Britain; throughout the British Empire the patriots had gained the upper hand over the parasites. Canada could no longer attack; indeed, she was hard pressed for defence. Pitt's plan was to send one army against the west, a fleet and an army against the east at Louisbourg, and a third army straight at the centre, along the line of Lake Champlain. This third, or central, army was the one which Montcalm had to meet. It was the largest yet seen in the New World. There were 6000 British regulars and 9000 American militia, with plenty of guns and all the other arms and stores required. Its general, Abercromby, was its chief weakness. He was a muddle-headed man, whom Pitt had not yet been able to replace by a better. But Lord Howe, whom Wolfe and Pitt both thought 'a perfect model of military virtue,' was second-in-command and the real head. He was young, as full of calm wisdom as of fiery courage, and the idol of Americans and of British regulars alike.

This year the campaign took place not in August but in July. By the middle of June it was known that Abercromby was coming. Even then Montcalm and his regulars were ready, but nothing else was. Every one knew

that Ticonderoga was the key to the south of Canada ; yet the fort was not ready, though the Canadian engineers had been tinkering at it for two whole summers. These engineers were, in fact, friends of Bigot, and had found that they could make money by spinning the work out as long as possible, charging for good material and putting in bad, and letting the gang plunder the stores on the way to the fort. Montcalm had arranged everything in 1756, and there was no good reason why Ticonderoga should not have been in perfect order in 1758, when the fate of Canada was hanging on its strength. But it was not. It had not even been rightly planned. The engineers were fools as well as knaves. When the proper French army engineers arrived, having been sent out at the last moment, they were horrified at the mess that had been made of the work. But it was too late then. Montcalm and Abercromby were both advancing ; and Montcalm would have to make up with the lives of his men for all that the knaves and fools had done against him.

Bad as this was, there was a still worse trouble. Vaudreuil now thought he saw a chance for another raid which would please the Canadians and hurt Montcalm. So he

actually took away 1600 men in June and sent them off to the Mohawk valley, farther west, under Lévis, who ought to have known better than to have allowed himself to be flattered into taking command. This came near to wrecking the whole defence. But the owls did not see, and the foxes did not care.

Meanwhile, Montcalm was hurrying his little handful of regulars to the front. He was to leave on June 24. On the night of the 23rd Vaudreuil sent a long string of foolish orders, worded in such a way by some of his foxy parasites that the credit for any victory would come to himself, while the blame for any failure would rest on Montcalm. This was more than flesh and blood could endure. Once before Montcalm had tried to open Vaudreuil's eyes to the mischief that was going on. Now he spoke out again, and proved his case so plainly that, for very shame, Vaudreuil had to change the orders. Montcalm arrived at Ticonderoga with his new engineers on the 30th. Here he found 3000 men and one bad fort. And the British were closing in with 15,000 men and good artillery.

The two armies lay only the length of Lake George apart, a little over thirty miles; in positions the same as last year, except that

Montcalm was now on the defensive with less than half as many men, and the British were on the offensive with more than twice as many. Montcalm's great object was to gain time. Every minute was precious. He sent messenger after messenger, begging Vaudreuil to hurry forward the Canadians and to call back the Mohawk valley raiding party of 1600 men. His 3000 harassed regulars were working almost night and day. The fort was patched up until nothing more could be done without pulling it down and building a new fort; and an entrenched camp was dug in front of it. Meanwhile Montcalm's little army, though engaged in all this work, was actually making such a show of force about the valley between the lakes that it checked the British, who now gave up their plan of seizing a forward position in the valley as a cover for the advance of the main body later on. Montcalm, with 3000 toil-worn soldiers, had outgeneralled Abercromby and Howe with 15,000 fresh ones. He had also gained four priceless days.

But on July 5 the British advanced in force. It had been a great sight the year before, when Montcalm had gone south along Lake George with 5000 men; but how much

more magnificent now, when Abercromby came north with 15,000 men, all eager for this Armageddon of the West. Perhaps there never has been any other occasion on which the pride and pomp of glorious war have been set in a scene of such wonderful peace and beauty. The midsummer day was perfectly calm. Not a cloud was in the sky. The lovely lake shone like a burnished mirror. The forest-clad mountains never looked greener or cooler, nor did their few bare crags or pinnacles ever stand out more clearly against the endless blue sky than when those thousand boats rowed on to what 15,000 men thought certain victory. The procession of boats was wide enough to stretch from shore to shore; yet it was much longer than its width. On each side went the Americans, 9000 men in blue and buff. In the centre came 6000 British regulars in scarlet and gold, among them a thousand kilted Highlanders of the splendid 'Black Watch,' led by their major, Duncan Campbell of Inverawe, whose weird had told him a year before that he should fight and fall at a place with what was then to him an unknown name—Ticonderoga. The larger boats were in the rear, lashed together, two by two, with platforms laid across them for artillery.

And so the brave array advanced. The colours fluttered gallantly with the motion of the boats. The thousands of brilliant scarlet uniforms showed gaily between the masses of more sober blue. The drums were beating, the bugles blowing, the bagpipes screaming defiance to the foe ; and every echo in the surrounding hills was roused to send its own defiance back.

The British halted for the night a few miles short of the north end of the lake. Next morning, the 6th, they set out again in time to land about noon within four miles of Ticonderoga in a straight line. There were two routes by which an army could march from Lake George to Lake Champlain. The first, the short way, was to go eastward across the four-mile valley. The second was twice as far, north and then east, all the way round through the woods. Since the valley road led to a bridge which Montcalm had blown up, Lord Howe went round through the woods with a party of rangers to see if that way would do. While he was pushing ahead the French reconnoitring party, which, from under cover, had been following the British movements the day before, was trying to find its own way back to Montcalm through the same woods.

Its Indian guides had run away in the night, scared out of their wits by the size of the British army. It was soon lost and, circling round, came between Howe and Abercromby. Suddenly the rangers and the French met in the dense forest. 'Who goes there?' shouted a Frenchman. 'Friends!' answered a British soldier in perfect French. But the uniforms told another tale and both sides fired. The French were soon overpowered by numbers, and the fifty or so survivors were glad to scurry off into the bush. But they had dealt one mortal blow. Lord Howe had fallen, and, with him, the head and heart of the whole British force.

Abercromby, a helpless leader, pottered about all the next day, not knowing what to do. Meanwhile Montcalm kept his men hard at work, and by night he was ready and hopeful. He had just written to his friend Doreil, the commissary of war at Quebec: 'We have only eight days' provisions. I have no Canadians and no Indians. The British have a very strong army. But I do not despair. My soldiers are good. From the movements of the British I can see they are in doubt. If they are slow enough to let me entrench the heights of Ticonderoga, I shall beat them.'

He had ended his dispatch to Vaudreuil with similar words: 'If they only let me entrench the heights I shall beat them.' And now, on the night of the 7th, he actually was holding the heights with his 3000 French regulars against the total British force of 15,000. Could he win on the 8th?

Late in the evening 300 regulars arrived under an excellent officer, Pouchot. At five the next morning, the fateful July 8, Lévis came in with 100 more. These were all, except 400 Canadians who arrived in driblets, some while the battle was actually going on. Vaudreuil had changed his mind again, and had decided to recall the Mohawk valley raiders. But too late. Lévis, Pouchot, and the Canadians had managed to get through only after a terrible forced march, spurred on by the hope of reaching their beloved Montcalm in time. The other men from the raid, and five times as many more from Canada, came in afterwards. But again too late.

The odds in numbers were four to one against Montcalm. Even in the matter of position he was anything but safe. The British could have forced him out of it by taking 10,000 men through the woods towards Crown Point, to cut off his retreat to the north,

while leaving 5000 in front of him to protect their march and harass his own embarkation. And even if they had chosen to attack him where he was they could have used their cannon with great effect from Rattlesnake Hill, overlooking his left flank, only a mile away, or from the bush straight in front of him, at much less than half that distance, or from both places together. Always on the alert he was ready for anything, retreat included, though he preferred fighting where he was, especially if the British were foolish enough to attack without their guns—the very thing they seemed about to do. After Howe's death they made mistakes that worked both ways against them. They waited long enough to let Montcalm get ready to meet their infantry; but not long enough to get their guns ready to meet him.

Now, too, blundering Abercromby believed a stupid engineer who said the trenches could be rushed with the bayonet—precisely what could not be done. The peninsula of Ticonderoga was strong towards Lake Champlain, the narrows of which it entirely commanded. But, against infantry, it was even stronger towards the land, where trenches had been dug. The peninsula was almost a square. It jutted out into the lake about three-quarters

of a mile, and its neck was of nearly the same width. Facing landward, the direction from which the British came, the left half of the peninsula was high, the right low. Montcalm entrenched the left half and put his French regulars there. He made a small trench in the middle of the right half for the Canadian regulars and militia, and cut down the trees everywhere, all round. The position of the Canadians was not strong in itself; but if the British rushed it they would be taken in flank by the French and in front by the fort, which was half a mile in rear of the trenches and could fire in any direction; while if they turned to rush the French right, they would have to charge uphill with the fire of the fort on their left.

Montcalm's men were already at work at five o'clock in the morning of the 8th when Lévis marched in; and they went on working like ants till the battle began, though all day the heat was terrific. Some of the trees cut down were piled up like the wall of a log-cabin, only not straight but zigzag, like a 'snake' fence, so that the enemy should be caught between two fires at every angle. This zigzag wooden wall was, of course, well loopholed. In front of it was its zigzag ditch; and in front of the

ditch were fallen trees, with their branches carefully trimmed and sharpened, and pointing outwards against the enemy. To make sure that his men should know their places in battle Montcalm held a short rehearsal. Then all fell to work again with shovel, pick, and axe.

Presently five hundred British Indians under Sir William Johnson appeared on Rattlesnake Hill and began to amuse themselves by firing off their muskets, which, of course, were perfectly useless at a distance of a mile. In the meantime Abercromby had drawn back his men from the woods and had made up his mind to take the short cut through the valley and rebuild the bridge which Montcalm had destroyed. This took up the whole morning; and it was not till noon that the British advance guard began to drive in the French outposts.

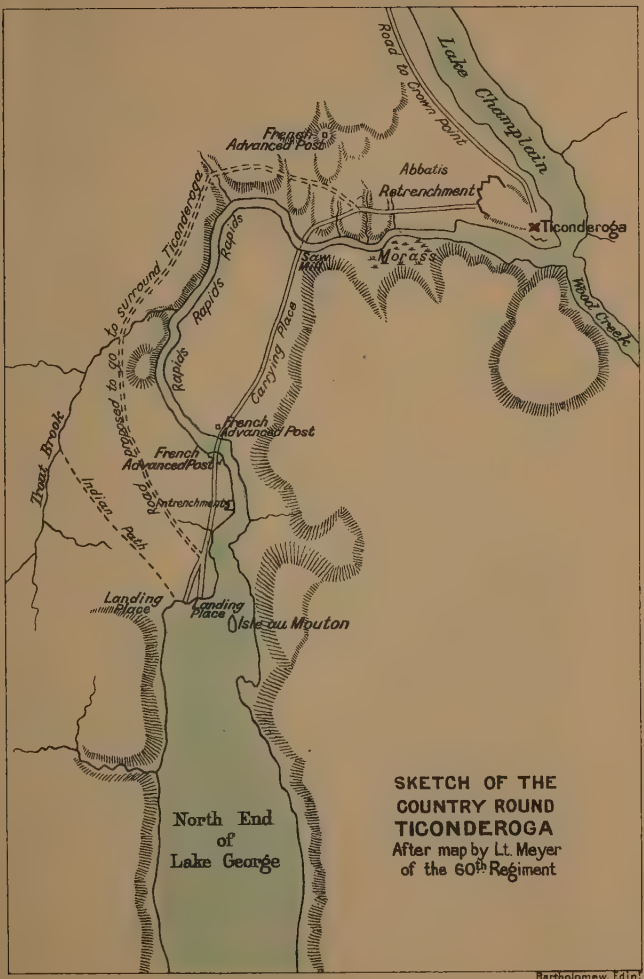
A few shots were heard. The outposts came back to the trenches. French officers on the look-out spied the blue rangers coming towards the far side of the clearings and spreading out cautiously to right and left. Then, in the centre, a mass of moving red and the fitful glitter of steel told Montcalm that his supreme moment had come at last. He raised his hand above his head. An officer, posted in the rear, made a signal to the fort

half a mile farther back. A single cannon fired one shot; and every soldier laid down his tools and took up his musket. In five minutes a line three-deep had been formed behind the zigzag stockade, which looked almost like the front half of a square. The face towards the enemy was about five hundred yards long. The left face was about two hundred yards, and the right, overlooking the low ground, ran back quite three hundred. Lévis had charge of the right, Bourlamaque of the left. Montcalm himself took the centre, straight in the enemy's way. As he looked round, for the last time, and saw how steadily that long, white, three-deep, zigzag line was standing at its post of danger, with the blue Royal Roussillon in the middle, and the grenadiers drawn up in handy bodies just behind, ready to rush to the first weak spot, he thrilled with the pride of the soldier born who has an army fit to follow him.

All round the far side of the clearing the blue rangers were running, stooping, slinking forward, and increasing in numbers every second. In a few minutes not a stump near the edge of the bush but had a muzzle pointing out from beside it. Soon not one but four great, solid masses of redcoats were showing through the trees,

less than a quarter of a mile away. Presently they all formed up correctly, and stood quite still for an anxious minute or two. Then, as if each red column was a single being, with heart and nerves of its own, the whole four stirred with that short, tense quiver which runs through every mass of men when they prepare to meet death face to face. Behind the loopholed wall there was a murmur from three thousand lips—'Here they come!'—and the answering quiver ran through the zigzag, white ranks of the French. Montcalm's officers immediately repeated his last caution: 'Steady, boys. Don't fire till the redcoats reach the stakes and you get the word!'

At the edge of the trees the British officers were also reminding their men about the orders. 'Remember: no firing at all; nothing but the bayonet; and follow the officers in!' *Quick—March!* and the four dense columns came out of the wood, drew clear of it altogether, and advanced with steady tramp, their muskets at the shoulder and their bayonets gleaming with a deadly sheen under the fierce, hot, noonday sun. On they came, four magnificent processions, full of the pride of arms and the firm hope of glorious victory. Three of them were uniform masses of ordinary


Road to Crown Point
Lake Champlain
French Advanced Post
Abbatis Retrenchment
Ticonderoga
Sawmill
Morass
Rapids
Rapids
Rapids
Road to surround Ticonderoga
Carrying Place
Mud Creek
French Advanced Post
French Advanced Post
Trout Brook
Indian Path
Road
Entrenchments
Landing Place
Landing Place
Isle au Mouton
North End of Lake George
SKETCH OF THE COUNTRY ROUND TICONDEROGA
After map by Lt. Meyer of the 60th Regiment
Bartholomew, Edin.

redcoats. But the fourth, making straight for Montcalm himself, was half grenadiers, huge men with high-pointed hats, and half Highlanders, with swinging kilts and dancing plumes. The march was a short one; but it seemed long, for at every step the suspense became greater and greater. At last the leading officers suddenly waved their swords, the bugles rang out the *Charge!* and then, as if the four eager columns had been slipped from one single leash together, they dashed at the trees with an exultant roar that echoed round the hills like thunder.

Montcalm gripped his sword, and every French finger tightened on the trigger. His colonels watched him eagerly. Up went his sword and up went theirs. *Ready!—Present!——Fire!!* and a terrific, double-shotted, point-blank volley crashed out of that zigzag wall and simply swept away the heads of the charging columns. But the men in front were no sooner mown down than the next behind them swarmed forward. Again the French fired, again the leading British fell, and again more British rushed forward. The British sharpshooters now spread out in swarms on the flanks of the columns and fired back, as did the first ranks of the columns themselves.

But they had much the worse of this kind of fighting. Again the columns surged forward, broke up as they reached the trees, and were shot down as they struggled madly among the sharpened branches.

Montcalm had given orders that each man was to fire for himself, whenever he could get a good shot at an enemy; and that the officers were only to look after the powder and shot, see that none was wasted, and keep their men steady in line. His own work was to watch the whole fight and send parties of grenadiers from his reserve to any point where the enemy seemed likely to break in. But the defence weakened only in a single place, where the regiment of Berry, which had a good many recruits, wavered and began to sway back from its loopholes. Its officers, however, were among their men in a moment, and had put them into their places again before the grenadiers whom Montcalm sent running down could reach them.

Again and again the British sharpshooters repeated their fire; again and again the heads of the columns were renewed by the men behind, as those in front were mown down by the French. At last, but slowly, sullenly, and turning to have shot after shot at that stubborn

defence of Montcalm's, the redcoats gave way and retreated, leaving hundreds of killed and wounded behind them. Montcalm was sure now that all was going well. He had kept several officers moving about the line, and their reports were all of the same kind—'men steady, firing well, no waste of ammunition, not many killed and wounded, all able to hold their own.' Here and there a cartridge or grenade had set the wooden walls alight. But men were ready with water; and even when the flames caught on the side towards the enemy there was no lack of volunteers to jump down and put them out. The fort, half a mile in rear and overlooking the whole scene, did good work with its guns. Once it stopped an attack on the extreme left by a flotilla of barges which came out of the mouth of the river running through the four-mile valley between the lakes. Two barges were sent to the bottom. Several others were well peppered by the French reserves, who ran down to the bank of the river; and the rest turned round and rowed back as hard as they could.

In all this heat of action Vaudreuil was not forgotten; but he would not have felt flattered by what the soldiers said. All knew how slow he had been about sending the Canadians,

3000 of whom were already long overdue. 'Bah!' they said during the first lull in the battle; 'the governor has sold the colony; but we won't let him deliver the goods! God save the King and Montcalm!'

This first lull was not for long. On came the four red columns again, just as stubborn as before. Again they charged. Again they split up in front as they reached the fatal trees. Again they were shot down. Again rank after rank replaced the one that fell before it. Again the sharpshooters stood up to that death-dealing loopholed wall. And again the British retired slowly and sullenly, leaving behind them four larger heaps of killed and wounded.

A strange mistake occurred on both sides. Whenever the French soldiers shouted 'God save the King and Montcalm,' the ensigns carrying the colours of the regiment of Guienne waved them high in the air. The flags were almost white, and some of the British mistook them for a sign of surrender. Calling out 'Quarter, Quarter!' the redcoats held their muskets above their heads and ran in towards the wall. The French then thought it was the British who wished to surrender, and called out 'Ground Arms!' But Pouchot, the officer who had marched night and day from the

Mohawk valley to join Montcalm, seeing what he thought a serious danger that the British would break through, called out 'Fire!' and his men, most of them leaning over the top of the wall, poured in a volley that cut down more than a hundred of the British.

The Canadians in the separate trench on the low ground, at the extreme right, were not closely engaged at all. They and the American rangers took pot-shots at each other without doing much harm on either side. In the middle of the battle the Canadians were joined by 250 of their friends, just come in from Lake Champlain. But even with this reinforcement they made only a very feeble attack on the exposed left flank of the British column nearest to them on the higher ground, in spite of the fact that this column was engaged in a keen fight with the French in its front, and was getting much the worse of it. When Lévis sent two French officers down to lead an attack on the British column the Canadian officers joined it at once. But the mass of the men hung back. They were raiders and bush-fighters. They had no bayonets. Above all, they did not intend to come to close quarters if they could help it. Ticonderoga was no attack by men from the British colonies and

no French-Canadian defence and victory. It was a stand-up fight between the French and the British regulars, who settled it between themselves alone.

About five o'clock the two left columns of the British joined forces to make a supreme effort. They were led by the Highlanders, who charged with the utmost fury, while the two right columns made an equally brave attack elsewhere. The front ranks were shot down as before. But the men in rear rushed forward so fast—every fallen man seeming to make ten more spring over his body—that Montcalm was alarmed, and himself pressed down at the head of his grenadiers to the point where the fight was hottest. At the same time Lévis, finding his own front clear of the old fourth column, brought over the regiment of La Reine and posted it in rear of the men who most needed its support. These two reinforcements turned the scale of victory, and the charge failed.

Abercromby, unlike Montcalm, never exposed himself on the field at all. But, for the second time, he sent word that the trenches must be taken with the bayonet. The response was another attack. But the men were tired out by the sweltering heat and a whole after-

noon of desperate fighting. They advanced, fired, had their front ranks shot down again; and once more retired in sullen silence. The last British attack had failed. Their sharpshooters and the American rangers covered the retreat. Montcalm had won the day, the most glorious that French arms had seen in the whole of their long American career.

The British had lost 2000 men, nearly all regulars. But they still had 4000 regulars left, more than Montcalm's entire command could muster now. He went into action with 3500 French regulars, 150 Canadian regulars, 250 Canadian militia, and 15 Indians: a total of 3915. At four o'clock 250 more Canadians arrived. But as his loss was 400 killed and wounded, nearly all French regulars, he had not 4000 fit for action, of all kinds together, at any one time; and he ended the day with only 3765. On the other hand, Abercromby still had nearly all his 9000 militia, besides 500 Indians, who, though worthless in the battle, were dangerous in the bush. Under these conditions it would have been sheer madness for Montcalm to have followed the British into their own country, especially as he lacked food almost more than he lacked men.

The losses of the different kinds of troops on both sides show us by whom most of the fighting was done. The Indians had no losses, either from among the 15 French or the 500 British. The Canadians and the American militia each lost about one man in every twenty-seven. The French regulars, fighting behind entrenchments and under a really great general, lost in proportion about three times as many as these others did, or one man in every nine. The British regulars, fighting in the open against entrenchments and under a blundering commander, lost nearly one man in every three.

Abercromby, having been pig-headed in his advance, now became chicken-hearted in his retreat. He was in no danger. Yet he ran like a hare. Had it not been for his steady regulars and some old hands among the rangers his return would have become a perfect rout. Pitt soon got rid of him; and he retired into private life with the well-earned nickname of 'Mrs. Nabby-Cromby.'

Montcalm was a devout man. He felt that the issue of the day had been the result of an appeal to the God of Battles; and he set up a cross on the ground he had won,

with a Latin inscription that shows both his modesty and his scholarship :

'Quid dux? Quid miles? Quid strata ingentia ligna?
En signum! En victor! Deus hic, Deus ipse, triumphat!'

'General, soldier, and ramparts are as naught!
Behold the conquering Cross! 'Tis God the triumph wrought!'

But the glorious joy of victory did not last long. Vaudreuil claimed most of the credit for himself and the Canadians. He wrote lying dispatches to France and senseless orders to Montcalm. Now that reinforcements were worse than useless, because they ate up the food and could not attack the enemy, he kept on sending them every day. Montcalm was stung to the quick by the letters he received. After getting three foolish orders to march into the British colonies he wrote back sharply : 'I think it very strange that you find yourself, at a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, so well able to make war in a country you have never seen!' Nor was this all. Vaudreuil had also sent Indians, of course after the need for them had passed. They were idle and a perfect nuisance to the French. They began stealing the hospital stores and all the strong drink they could lay hands on. Montcalm checked them sharply. Then they com-

plained to Vaudreuil, and Vaudreuil reproached Montcalm.

It was the same wretched story over and over again: the owls and foxes in the rear thwarting, spiting and robbing the lions at the front. Montcalm was more sick at heart than ever. He saw that anything he could say or do was of little use; and he again asked to be recalled. But he soon heard news which made him change his mind, no matter what the cost to his feelings. The east and the west had both fallen into British hands. Louisbourg and the Ohio were taken. Only Canada itself remained; and, even now, Pitt was planning to send against it overpowering forces both by sea and land. Montcalm would not, could not, leave the ruined colony he had fought for so long against such fearful odds. In the desperate hope of saving it from impending doom, he decided to stay to the end.

CHAPTER VI

QUEBEC

1759

HAVING decided to stay in Canada Montcalm did all he could to come to terms with Vaudreuil, so that the French might meet with a united front the terrible dangers of the next campaign. He spoke straight out in a letter written to Vaudreuil on August 2, less than a month after his victory at Ticonderoga: 'I think the real trouble lies with the people who compose your letters, and with the mischief-makers who are trying to set you against me. You may be sure that none of the things which are being done against me will ever lessen my zeal for the good of the country or my respect towards you, the governor. Why not change your secretary's style? Why not give me more of your confidence? I take the liberty of saying that the king's service would gain by it, and we should no longer appear so disunited that even the

British know all about it. I enclose a newspaper printed in New York which mentions it. False reports are made to you. Efforts are made to embitter you against me. I think you need not suspect my military conduct, when I am really doing all I can. After my three years of command under your orders what need is there for your secretary to tell me about the smallest trifles and give me petty orders that I should myself blush to give to a junior captain?'

When Montcalm wrote this he had not yet heard the bad news from Louisbourg and the Ohio, and he was still anxious to be recalled to France. Vaudreuil, of course, was delighted at the prospect of getting rid of him: 'I beseech you,' he wrote home to France, 'to ask the king to recall the Marquis of Montcalm. He desires it himself. The king has confided Canada to my own care, and I cannot help thinking that it would be a very bad thing for the marquis to remain here any longer!' There spoke the owl. And here the lion, when the bad news came: 'I had asked for my recall after Ticonderoga. But since the affairs of Canada are getting worse, it is my duty to help in setting them right again, or at least to stave off ruin so long as I can.'

Vaudreuil and Montcalm met and talked matters over. Even the governor began to see that the end was near, unless France should send out help in the spring of 1759. He was so scared at the idea of losing his governorship in such an event that he actually agreed with Montcalm to send two honest and capable men to France to tell the king and his ministers the truth. Two officers, Bougainville and Doreil, were chosen. They sailed in November with letters from both Montcalm and Vaudreuil. Nothing could have been better or truer than the letters Vaudreuil gave them to present at court. 'Colonel Bougainville is, in all respects, better fitted than anybody else to inform you of the state of the colony. I have given him my orders, and you can trust entirely in everything he tells you.' 'M. Doreil, the commissary of war, may be entirely trusted. Everybody likes him here.' But, by the same ship, the same Vaudreuil wrote a secret letter against these officers and against Montcalm. 'In order to condescend to the Marquis of Montcalm and do all I can to keep on good terms with him I have given letters to Colonel Bougainville and M. Doreil. But I must tell you that they do not really know Canada well, and I warn you that they are

nothing but creatures of the Marquis of Montcalm.'

The winter of 1758-59 was like the two before it, only very much worse. The three might be described, in so many words, as bad, worse, and worst of all. Doreil had seen the stores and provisions of the army plundered by the Bigot gang, the soldiers half starved, the supposed presents for the Indians sold to them at the highest possible price, and the forts badly built of bad materials by bad engineers, who made a Bigot-gang profit out of their work. A report was also going home from a French inspector who had been sent out to see why the cost of government had been rising by leaps and bounds. Things were cheap in those days, and money was scarce and went a long way. When this was the case the whole public expense of Canada for a year should not have been more than one million dollars. But in Montcalm's first year it had already passed two millions. In his second it had passed four. And now, in his third, it was getting very near to eight.

Where did the money go? Just where all public money always goes when parasites govern a country. The inspector found out that many items of cost for supplies to the

different posts had a cipher added to them. The officials told him why: 'We have to do it because the price of living has gone up ten times over.' But how did such an increase come about? The goods were sold from favourite to favourite, each man getting his wholly illegal profit, till the limit was reached beyond which Bigot thought it would not be safe to go. By means of false accounts, by lying reports and by the aid of accomplices in France who stopped letters from Montcalm and other honest men, the game went on for two years. Now it was found out. But the gang was still too strong in Canada to be broken up. In France it was growing weak. Another couple of years and all its members would have been turned out by the home government. They knew this; and, seeing that their end was coming in one way or another, they thought a British conquest could not be much worse than a French prison; indeed, it might be better, for a complete and general ruin might destroy proof of their own guilt. The lions would die fighting—and a good thing too! But the owls and foxes might escape with the spoils. 'What a country, where knaves grow rich and honest men are ruined!'

THE CAMROSE LUTHERAN COLLEGE
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Montcalm wrote home to his family by every ship. He might not have long to do so. Just after Ticonderoga he wrote to his wife: 'Thank God! it is all over now until the beginning of May. We shall have desperate work in the next campaign. The enemy will have 50,000 men in the field, all together; and we, how many? I dare not tell it. Adieu, my heart, I long for peace and you. When shall I see my Candiac again?' On November 21, 1758, the last ship left for France. He wrote to his old mother, to whom he had always told the story of his wars, from the time when, thirty-one years before, as a stripling of fifteen, he had joined his father's regiment in the very year that Wolfe was born: 'You will be glad to hear from me up to the last moment and know, for the hundredth time, that I am always thinking of you all at home, in spite of the fate of New France and my duty with the army and the state. We did our best these last three years; and so, God helping us, we shall in 1759—unless you can make a peace for us in Europe.'

The wretched winter dragged on. The French were on half rations, the Canadians worse off still. In January Montcalm wrote in his diary: 'terrible distress round Quebec.'

Then, the same day: 'balls, amusements, picnics, and tremendous gambling.' Another entry: 'in spite of the distress and impending ruin of the colony pleasure parties are going on the whole time.' He himself had only plain fare—horse-flesh and the soldier's half ration of bread—on his table. No wonder the vampires hated him!

May came; but not a word from France. For eight whole months no French ship had been able to cross the sea, to bring aid for the needy colony. Day by day the half-starved people scanned the St Lawrence for sight of a sail. At last, on the 10th, they had their reward. A French ship arrived; more ships followed; and by the 20th there were twenty-three in the harbour, all laden with provisions, stores, and men. The help was inadequate. There were only 326 soldiers for Montcalm on board, and there were not enough provisions to keep the soldiers and people on full rations through the summer, even with the help of what crops might be harvested while the farmers remained under arms. But Montcalm made the best of it: 'a little is precious to those who have nothing.'

Bougainville brought out plenty of promotions and honours for the victory at

Ticonderoga. Montcalm was made lieutenant-general of the king in Canada. Bougainville told him his name was known all over France; 'even the children use it in their games.' Old Marshal Belle Isle, a gallant veteran, now at the head of the French army, and a great admirer of Montcalm, had sent out the king's last orders: 'No matter how small the space may be that you can retain, you must somehow keep a foothold in America; for, if we once lose the whole country, we shall never get it back again. The king counts upon your zeal, your courage, and your firmness to spare no pains and no exertion. You must hold out to the very last, whatever happens. I have answered for you to the king.' Montcalm replied: 'I shall do everything to maintain a foothold in New France, or die in its defence'; and he kept his word.

There was both joy and sorrow in the news from Candiac. His eldest daughter was happily married. His eldest son was no less happily engaged. But, at the last minute, Bougainville had heard that another daughter had died suddenly; he did not know which one. 'It must be poor Mirète,' said Montcalm, 'I love her so much.' His last letters home show with what a brave despair he faced the

coming campaign. 'Can we hope for another miracle to save us? God's will be done! I await news from France with impatience and dread. We had none for eight months, and who knows if we shall have any more this year. How dearly I have to pay for the dismal privilege of figuring in the *Gazette*. I would give up all my honours to see you again. But the king must be obeyed. Adieu, my heart, I believe I love you more than ever!'

Bougainville had also brought out the news that Pitt was sending enormous forces to conquer Canada for good and all. One army was to attack the last French posts on the Lakes. Another was to come up Lake Champlain and take Montreal. A combined fleet and army, under Saunders and Wolfe, was to undertake the most difficult task and to besiege Quebec. There was no time to lose. Even Vaudreuil saw that. Pouchot was left at Niagara with 1000 men. De la Corne had another 1000 on the shores of Lake Ontario. Bourlamaque held Lake Champlain with 3000. But the key of all Canada was Quebec; and so every man who could be spared was brought down to defend it. Saunders and Wolfe had 27,000 men of all kinds, 9000 soldiers and 18,000 sailors,

mostly man-of-war's-men. The total number which the French could collect to meet them was 17,000. Of these 17,000 only 4000 were French regulars. There were over 1000 Canadian regulars; less than 2000 sailors, very few of whom were man-of-war's-men; about 10,000 Canadian militia, and a few hundred Indians. The militia included old men and young boys, any one, in fact, who could fire off a musket. The grand totals, all over the seat of war, were 44,000 British against 22,000 French.

Having done all he could for Niagara, Ontario, and Lake Champlain, Montcalm hurried down to Quebec on May 22. Vaudreuil followed on the 23rd. On the same day the advance guard of the British fleet arrived at Bic on the lower St Lawrence. From that time forward New France was sealed up as completely as if it had shrunk to a single fort. Nothing came in and nothing went out. The strangling coils of British sea-power were all round it. But still Montcalm stood defiantly at bay. 'You must maintain your foothold to the very last.'—'I shall do it or die.'

His plan was to keep the British at arm's length as long as possible. The passage known

as the 'Traverse' from the north channel to the south, at the lower end of the Island of Orleans, was a good place to begin. Strong batteries there might perhaps sink enough of the fleet to block the way for the rest. These Montcalm was eager to build, but Vaudreuil was not. Had not Vaudreuil's Canadian pilots prophesied that no British fleet could possibly ascend the river in safety, even without any batteries to hinder it? And was not Vaudreuil so sure of this himself that he had never had the Traverse properly sounded at all? He would allow no more than a couple of useless batteries, which the first British men-of-war soon put to silence. The famous Captain Cook, who was sailing master of a frigate on this expedition, made the necessary soundings in three days; and the fleet of forty warships and a hundred transports went through without a scratch.

Vaudreuil's second chance was with seven fireships, which, having been fitted out by the Bigot gang at ten times the proper cost, were commanded by a favoured braggart called Delouche. The night after the British fleet had arrived in the Orleans Channel, the whole French camp turned out to watch what it was hoped would be a dramatic and

effective attack on the mass of shipping which lay at anchor near the head of the island. The fireships were sent down with the ebb-tide, straight for the crowded British fleet. But Delouche lost his nerve, fired his ship too soon, jumped into a boat and rowed away. Five of the others did the same. The seventh was a hero, Dubois de la Milletière, who stuck to his post, but was burned to death there in a vain effort to get among the enemy. Had the six others waited longer the whole of the seven French crews might have escaped together and some damage might have been done to the British. As it was there was nothing but splendid fireworks for both sides. The best man on the French side was killed for nothing; no harm was done to the British; and for equipping the fireships the Bigot gang put another hundred thousand stolen dollars into their thievish pockets. 'What a country, where knaves grow rich and honest men are ruined!'

Vaudreuil's third chance was to defend the shore opposite Quebec, Point Levis, which Montcalm wished to hold as long as possible. If the French held it the British fleet could not go past Quebec, between two fires, and Wolfe could not bombard the town from the opposite

heights. But, early in July, Vaudreuil withdrew the French troops from Point Levis, and Wolfe at once occupied the shore and began to build his batteries. As soon as the British had made themselves secure Vaudreuil thought it time to turn them out. But he sent only 1500 men; and so many of these were boys and youths at school and college that the French troops dubbed them 'The Royal Syntax.' These precious 1500 went up the north shore, crossed over after dark, and started to march, in two separate columns, down the south shore towards Levis. Presently the first column heard a noise in the woods and ran back to join the second. But the second, seeing what it mistook for the enemy, fired into the first and ran for dear life. Then the first, making a similar mistake, blazed into the second, and, charmed with its easy victory, started hotfoot in pursuit. After shooting at each other a little more, just to make sure, the two lost columns joined together again and beat a hasty retreat.

With the opposite shore lost Montcalm had now no means of keeping Wolfe at any distance. But Montcalm had chosen his position with skill, and it was so strong by nature that it might yet be held till the autumn, if only he

was allowed to defend it in his own way. His left was protected by the Montmorency river, narrow, but deep and rapid, with only two fords, one in thick bush, where the British regulars would have least chance, and another at the mouth, directly under the fire of the French left. His centre was the six miles of ground stretching towards Quebec between the Montmorency and the little river St Charles. Here the bulk of his army was strongly entrenched, mostly on rising ground, just beyond the shore of the great basin of the St Lawrence, the wide oozy tidal flats of which the British would have to cross if they tried to attack him in front. His right was Quebec itself and the heights of the north shore above.

Wolfe pitched his camp on the far side of the cliffs near the Falls of Montmorency; and one day tried to cross the upper fords, four miles above the falls, to attack Montcalm in the rear. But Montcalm was ready for him in the bush and beat him back.

The next British move was against the left of Montcalm's entrenchments. On July 31 Wolfe's army was busy at an early hour; and all along the French front men-of-war were under way with their decks cleared for action. At ten o'clock, when the tide was

SIEGE OF QUEBEC
1759
English Miles
0
1
2
River
St Charles
French Camp
Earthworks
Headquarters of Montcalm
Headquarters of Levis
Falls of Montmorency
French Camp
Earthworks
Earthworks
Levis Camp
Attack 31st July
Headquarters of Wolfe & Monckton
River Beauport
Floating Battery
Shoals of Beauport
Shoals
General Hospitals
Earthworks
Admiral Saunders's Division
North Channel
ST LAWRENCE
RIVER
Road from Sillery
Road from Sillery
Plains of Abraham
QUEBEC
Anse au Foulon Landing of Wolfe
Cape Diamond
Admiral Holmes's Division
Point aux Pères
Monckton's Camp
Point Levis
South Channel
West Point
Hardy's Camp
ISLAND OF ORLEANS
Bartholomew, Edin.

high, two small armed ships were run aground opposite the French redoubt on the beach a mile from the falls; and they, the men-of-war, and Wolfe's batteries beyond the falls, all began to fire on the redoubt and the trenches behind it. Montcalm fired back so hard at the two armed ships that the British had to leave them. Then he gave orders for his army to be ready to come at a moment's notice, but to keep away from the threatened point for the present. By this means, and from the fact that his trenches had been very cleverly made by his own French engineers, he lost very few men, even though the British kept up a furious fire.

The British kept cannonading all day. By four o'clock one British brigade was trying to land beside the two stranded armed ships, and the two other brigades were seen to be ready to join it from their camp at Montmorency. The redcoats had plenty of trouble in landing; and it was not till six that their grenadiers, a thousand strong, were forming up to lead the attack. Suddenly there was an outburst of cheering from the British sailors. The grenadiers mistook this for the commencement of the attack. They broke their ranks and dashed madly at the redoubt. The

garrison at once left it and ran back, up the hill, into the trenches. The grenadiers climbed into it, pell-mell; but, as it was open towards its rear, it gave them no cover from the terrific fire that the French, on Montcalm's signal, now poured into them. Again they made a mad charge, this time straight at the trenches. Montcalm had called in every man there was room for, and such a storm of bullets, grape-shot, cannon-balls, and shells now belched forth that even British grenadiers could not face it. A thunderstorm burst, with a deluge of rain; and, amid the continued roar of nature's and man's artillery, half the grenadiers were seen retreating, while half remained dead or wounded on the field.

The two redcoat brigades from Montmorency had now joined the remnant of the first, which had had such a rough experience. Montcalm kept his men well in hand to meet this more formidable attack. But Wolfe had had enough. The first brigade went back to its boats. The second and third brigades marched back to Montmorency along the beach in perfect order, the men waving their hats in defiance at the French, who jumped up on top of their earthworks and waved defiance back. Before retiring the British set fire to the two

stranded ships. The day had been as disastrous for Wolfe as glorious for Montcalm.

August was a hard month for both armies. Montcalm had just won his fourth victory over the British; and he would have saved Canada once more if only he could keep Wolfe out of Quebec till October. Wolfe was ill, weak, disappointed, defeated. But his army was at least perfectly safe from attack. With a powerful fleet to aid him Wolfe was never in any danger in the positions he occupied. His army was always well provisioned; even luxuries could be bought in the British camp. The fleet patrolled the whole course of the St Lawrence; convoys of provision ships kept coming up throughout the siege, and Montcalm had no means of stopping a single vessel.

Montcalm could not stop the ships; but the ships could stop him. He was completely cut off from the rest of the world, except from the country above Quebec; and now that was being menaced too. The St Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal was the only link connecting the different parts of New France, and the only way by which Quebec could be provisioned. The course of the campaign could not have been foretold; and Montcalm

had to keep provisions in several places along the river above Quebec, in case he had to retreat. It would have been foolish to put all the food into Quebec, as he would not be able to take enough away with him, should he be obliged to leave for Montreal or perhaps for the Great Lakes, or even for a last desperate stand among the swamps of New Orleans. 'You must keep a foothold in America.'— 'I shall do everything to keep it, or die.' Quebec was the best of all footholds. But if not Quebec, then some other place not so good: Montreal; an outpost on the Great Lakes; a camp beyond the Mississippi; or even one beside the Gulf of Mexico.

So, for every reason, Montcalm was quite as anxious about the St Lawrence above Quebec as he was about Quebec itself. Ever since July 18 Admiral Saunders had been sending more and more ships up the river, under cover of the fire from the Levis batteries. In August things had grown worse for Montcalm. Admiral Holmes commanded a strong squadron in the river above Quebec. Under his convoy one of Wolfe's brigades landed at Deschambault, forty miles above Quebec, and burnt a magazine of food and other stores. This step promised disaster for the French. Montcalm

sent Bougainville up along the north shore with 1000 men to watch the enemy and help any of the French posts there to prevent a landing. Whenever Saunders and Wolfe sent further forces in that direction Montcalm did the same. He gave Bougainville more men. He strengthened both the shore and floating batteries, and by means of mounted messengers he kept in almost hourly touch with what was going on.

The defence of the north shore above Quebec was of the last importance. The only safe way of feeding Quebec was by barges from Montreal, Sorel, and Three Rivers, which came down without any trouble to the Richelieu rapids, a swift and narrow part of the St Lawrence near Deschambault, where some small but most obstructive French frigates and the natural difficulties in the river would probably keep Holmes from going any higher. There was further safety to the French in the fact that Wolfe could not take his army to this point from Montmorency without being found out in good time to let Montcalm march up to meet him.

It was vital to Montcalm to keep the river open. It would never do to be obliged to land provisions above Deschambault and to cart

them down by road. To begin with, there were not enough carts and horses, nor enough men to be spared for driving them; and, in addition, the roads were bad. Moreover, transport by land was not to be compared with transport by water; it was easier to carry a hundred tons by water than one by land. Accordingly, Quebec was fed by way of the river. The French barges would creep down, close alongshore, at night, and try to get into the Foulon, a cove less than two miles above Quebec. Here they would unload their cargoes, which were then drawn up the hill, carted across the Plains of Abraham, and down the other side, over the bridge of boats, into the French camp.

Montcalm was anxious, but not despairing. Vaudreuil was, indeed, as mischievous as ever. But now that the two enemies were facing each other, in much the same way, for weeks together, there was less mischief for him to make. He made, however, as much as he could. Everything that happened in the French camp was likely to be known next day in the British camp. Vaudreuil could not keep any news to himself. But he tried to keep news from Montcalm and to carry out thwarting plans of his own. Wolfe had no draw-

backs like this. News from his camp was always stale, because the fleet was a perfect screen, and no one on the French side could tell what was going on behind it till long after the chance had gone by.

One day Captain Vauquelin, a French naval officer, offered to board a British man-of-war that was in the way of the provision boats, if Vaudreuil would let him take five hundred men and two frigates, which he would bring down the river in the night. Vauquelin was a patriot hero, who had done well at Louisbourg the year before, and who was to do well at Quebec the year after. But, of course, he was not a member of the Bigot gang. So he was set aside in favour of a parasite, who made a hopeless bungle of the whole affair.

The siege dragged on, and every day seemed to tell in favour of Montcalm, in spite of all the hardships the French were suffering. Wolfe was pounding the city into ruins from his Levis batteries ; but not getting any nearer to taking it. He was also laying most of the country waste. But this was of no use either, unless the French barges on the river could be stopped altogether, and a landing in force could be made on the north shore close to Quebec.

Wolfe was right to burn the farms from

which the Canadians fired at his men. Armies may always destroy whatever is used to destroy them. But one of his British regular officers was disgracefully wrong in another matter. The greatest blackguard on either side, during the whole war, was Captain Alexander Montgomery of the 43rd Regiment, brother of the general who led the American invasion of Canada in 1775 and fell defeated before Quebec. Montgomery had a fight with the villagers of St Joachim, who had very foolishly dressed up as Indians. No quarter was given while the fight lasted, as Indians never gave it themselves. But some Canadians who surrendered were afterwards butchered in cold blood, by Montgomery's own orders, and actually scalped as well.

The siege went on with move and countermove. Both sides knew that September must be the closing month of the drama, and French hopes rose. There was bad news for them from Lake Champlain; but it might have been much worse. Amherst was advancing towards Montreal very slowly. Bourlamaque, an excellent officer, was retreating before him, but he thought that Montreal would be safe till the next year if some French reinforcements could be sent up from Quebec. Only good

troops would be of any use, and Montcalm had too few of them already. But if Amherst took Montreal the line of the St Lawrence would be cut at once. So Lévis was sent off with a thousand men, a fact which Wolfe knew the very day they left.

September came. The first and second days passed quietly enough. But on the third the whole scene of action was suddenly changed. From this time on, for the next ten days, Montcalm and his army were desperately trying to stave off the last and fatal move, which ended with one of the great historic battles of the world.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM

September 13, 1759

SEPTEMBER 3 looked like July 31 over again. One brigade of redcoats came in boats from the Point of Levy and rowed about in front of the left of Montcalm's entrenchments. The two others marched down the hill to the foot of the Falls of Montmorency. But here, instead of fording the mouth and marching along the beach, they entered boats and joined the first brigade, which was hovering in front of the French lines. Meanwhile, the main squadron of the fleet, under Saunders himself, was closing in before these same lines, with decks cleared for action. Montcalm thought that this was likely to be Wolfe's last move, and he felt sure he could beat him again. But no attack was made. As the ships closed in towards the shore the densely crowded boats suddenly turned and rowed off to the Point

of Levy. Wolfe had broken camp without the loss of a single man.

Now began for Montcalm ten terrible days and nights. From the time Wolfe left Montmorency to the time he stood upon the Plains of Abraham, Montcalm had no means whatever of finding out where the bulk of the British army was or what it intended to do. Even now, Vaudreuil had not sense enough to hold his tongue, and the French plans and movements were soon known to Wolfe, especially as the Canadians were beginning to desert in large numbers. Wolfe, on the other hand, kept his own counsel; the very few deserters from the British side knew little or nothing, and the fleet became a better screen than ever. For thirty miles, from the Falls of Montmorency up to above Pointe aux Trembles, the ships kept moving up and down, threatening first one part of the north shore and then another, and screening the south altogether. Sometimes there were movements of men-of-war, sometimes of transports, sometimes of boats, sometimes of any two of these, sometimes of all three together; sometimes there were redcoats on board one, or two, or all three kinds of craft, and sometimes not. It was a dreadful puzzle for Montcalm, a puzzle made

ten times worse because all the news of the British plans that could be found out was first told to Vaudreuil.

Gradually it seemed as if Wolfe was aiming at a landing somewhere on the stretch of thirteen miles of the north shore between Cap Rouge, nine miles above Quebec, and Pointe aux Trembles, twenty-two miles above. Camp gossip, the reports from Bougainville, who was still watching Holmes up the river, and whatever other news could be gathered, all seemed to point the same way. But Saunders was still opposite the Beauport entrenchments; and the British camps at the island of Orleans, the Point of Levy, and the Levis batteries still seemed to have a good many redcoats. The use of redcoats, however, made the puzzle harder than ever at this time, for Saunders had over 2000 marines, who were dressed in red and who at a distance could not be told from Wolfe's own soldiers.

Perhaps Wolfe was only making a feint at Pointe aux Trembles, and might, after all, come down against the entrenchments if he saw that Montcalm had weakened them. Perhaps, also, he might try to land, not at either end of the French line, but somewhere

in the middle, between Cap Rouge and Quebec. Nothing could be found out definitely. Certainly the British were looking for the weakest spot, wherever it was. So Montcalm did the best he could to defend nearly thirty miles of shoreline with the reduced army of 13,000 men which he now had. Sickness, desertion, losses in battle, and the reinforcements for Lake Champlain had taken away a good 4000. Again he reinforced Bougainville, and told him to watch more carefully than ever the menaced thirteen miles between Cap Rouge and Pointe aux Trembles. He himself looked after the garrison of Quebec. He made sure that the bulk of his army was ready to defend the Beauport entrenchments as well as before, and that it was also ready at a moment's notice to march up the river. He sent a good battalion of French regulars to guard the heights between Quebec and Cap Rouge, heights so strong by nature that nobody else seemed to think they needed defending at all.

This French battalion, that of La Guienne, marched up to their new position on the 5th, and made the nine miles between Quebec and Cap Rouge safe enough against any British attack. There were already posts and batteries to cover all the points where a body of men

could get up the cliffs, and the presence of a battalion reduced to nothing the real dangers in this quarter. By the 7th Vaudreuil had decided that these real dangers did not exist, that Montcalm was all wrong, especially about the Plains of Abraham, that there could be no landing of the enemy between Quebec and Cap Rouge, that there was not enough firewood there for both the Guienne battalion and the men at the posts and batteries, and that, in short, the French regulars must march back to the entrenchments. So back they came.

On the 8th and 9th the British vessels swarmed round Pointe aux Trembles. How many soldiers there were on board was more than Bougainville could tell. He knew only that a great many had been seen first from Cap Rouge, that later a great many had been seen from Pointe aux Trembles, and that every day bodies of soldiers had been landed and taken on board again at St Nicholas, on the south shore, between the two positions of Cap Rouge and Pointe aux Trembles. The British plan seemed to be to wear out their enemy. Daily the odds against the French grew; for shiploads of redcoats would move up and down with the strong tide and keep Bougainville's wretched, half-starved men tramping and

scrambling along the rough ground of the heights in order to follow and forestall this puzzling and persistent enemy.

On the 10th a French officer near the Foulon, one of the posts on the heights between Quebec and Cap Rouge, saw, through his telescope, that six British officers on the south shore were carefully surveying the heights all about him. When he reported this at once, Montcalm tried again to reinforce this point. He also tried to send a good officer to command the Foulon post. The officer stationed there was Vergor, one of the Bigot gang and a great friend of Vaudreuil's. Vergor had disgraced himself by giving up Fort Beauséjour in Acadia without a fight. He was now disgracing himself again by allowing fifty of the hundred men at the post to go and work at their farms in the valley of the St Charles, provided that they put in an equal amount of work on his own farm there. It was a bad feature of the case that his utter worthlessness was as well known to Wolfe as it was to Montcalm.

On the 11th and 12th the movements of the fleet became more puzzling than before. They still seemed, however, to point to a landing somewhere along those much threatened thirteen miles between Cap Rouge and Pointe

aux Trembles, but, more especially, at Pointe aux Trembles itself. By this time Bougainville's 2000 men were fairly worn out with constant marching to and fro; and on the evening of the 12th they were for the most part too tired to cook their suppers. Bougainville kept the bulk of them for the night near St Augustin, five miles below Pointe aux Trembles and eight miles above Cap Rouge, so that he could go to either end of his line when he made his inspection in the morning. He knew that at sunset some British vessels were still off Pointe aux Trembles. He knew also that most of the British vessels had gone down for the night to St Nicholas, on the south shore, only four miles nearer Quebec than he was at St Augustin. Bougainville and everybody else on both sides - except Wolfe and Montcalm themselves - thought the real attack was going to be made close to Pointe aux Trembles, for news had leaked out that this was the plan formed by the British brigadiers with Wolfe's own approval.

Down the river, below Quebec, in his six miles of entrenchments at Beauport, Montcalm was getting more and more uneasy on the fatal 12th. Where was Wolfe's army? The bulk of it, two brigades, was said to be

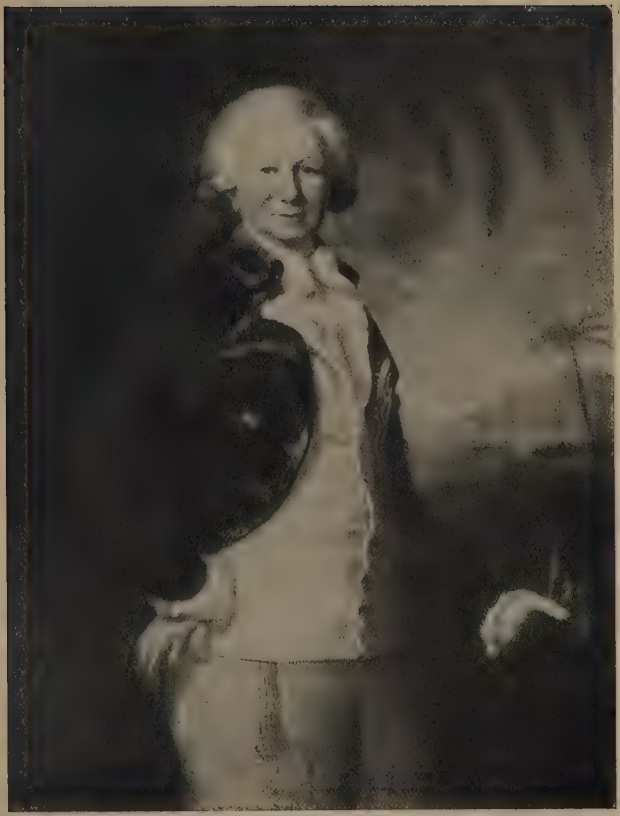
at St Nicholas, thirteen miles above Quebec, facing the same thirteen miles that Bougainville's worn-out men had been so long defending. But where was Wolfe's third brigade? Saunders remained opposite Beauport, as usual. His boats seemed very busy laying buoys, as if to mark out good landing-places for another attack. He had redcoats with him, too. Which were they? Marines? Soldiers? Nobody could see. There were more redcoats at the island of Orleans, more at the Point of Levy, more still near the Levis batteries. Were these all soldiers or were some of them marines? Why was Saunders beginning to bombard the entrenchments at Beauport and to send boats along the shore there after dark? Was this a feint or not? Why were the Levis batteries thundering so furiously against Quebec? Was it to cover Wolfe's crowded boats coming down to join Saunders at Beauport?

Montcalm was up all night, keeping his men ready for anything. That night Bougainville reported much the same news as for several days past. He expected to see Holmes and Wolfe back at Pointe aux Trembles in the morning. If occasion arose, he was, however, ready to march down to Cap Rouge as fast as

his tired-out men could go. His thirteen miles were being well watched.

What, however, about the nine miles of shore under his guard between Cap Rouge and Quebec? About them Vaudreuil was as stubborn as ever. They were a line of high cliffs, seemingly impregnable, and Vergor who defended them was his friend. Surely this was enough! But Montcalm saw what a chance the position offered to a man of such daring skill as Wolfe. Again he tried to have Vergor recalled, but in vain. Then, in the afternoon of the 12th, he took the bold but the only safe course of ordering the Guienne battalion, four hundred strong, to go up at once and camp for the night at the top of the Foulon, near Vergor. The men were all ready to march off when Vaudreuil found out what they were going to do. It was no order of his! It would belittle him to let Montcalm take his place! And, anyhow, it was all nonsense! Raising his voice so that the staff could hear him, he then said: 'The English haven't wings! Let La Guienne stay where it is! I 'll see about that Foulon myself to-morrow morning!'

'To-morrow morning' began early, long before Vergor and Vaudreuil were out of bed.



COMTE DE BOUGAINVILLE

From Doughty's *Siege of Quebec*

Of the two Vergor was up first; up first, and with a shock, to find redcoats running at his tent with fixed bayonets. He was off, like a flash, in his nightshirt, and Wolfe had taken his post. He ought to have been on the alert for friends as well as foes that early morning, because all the French posts had been warned to look out for a provision convoy which was expected down the north shore and in at the Foulon itself. But Vergor was asleep instead, and half his men were away at his farm. So Vaudreuil lost his chance to 'see about that Foulon himself' on that 'to-morrow morning.'

Saunders had been threatening the entrenchments at Beauport all night, and before daylight the Levis batteries had redoubled their fire against Quebec. But about five o'clock Montcalm's quick ear caught the sound of a new cannonade above Quebec. It came from the Foulon, which was only two miles and a half from the St Charles bridge of boats, though the tableland of the Plains of Abraham rose between, three hundred feet high. Montcalm's first thought was for the provision convoy, so badly needed in his half-starved camp. He knew it was expected down at the Foulon this very night, and that the adjacent Samos battery was to try to protect

it from the British men-of-war as it ran in. But he did not know that it had been stopped by a British frigate above Pointe aux Trembles, and that Wolfe's boats were taking its place and fooling the French sentries, who had been ordered to pass it quietly.

Yet he knew Wolfe; he knew Vergor; and now the sound of the cannonade alarmed him. Setting spurs to his horse, he galloped down from Beauport to the bridge of boats, giving orders as he went to turn out every man at once.

At the bridge he found Vaudreuil writing a letter to Bougainville. If Vaudreuil had written nothing else in his life, this single letter would be enough to condemn him for ever at the bar of history. With the British on the Plains of Abraham and the fate of half a continent trembling in the scale, he prattled away on his official foolscap as if Wolfe was at the head of only a few naughty boys whom a squad of police could easily arrest. '*I have set the army in motion. I have sent the Marquis of Montcalm with one hundred Canadians as a reinforcement.*'

Montcalm took up with him a good many more than the 'one hundred Canadians' Vaudreuil ordered him to take, and he sent

to Bougainville a message very different from the one Vaudreuil had written. What hero was ever more sorely tried? When he caught sight of the redcoats marching towards Quebec, in full view of the place where Vaudreuil was writing that idiotic letter, he exclaimed, as he well might: 'Ah! there they are, where they have no right to be!' Then, turning to the officers with him, he added: 'Gentlemen, this is a serious affair. Let every one take post at once!'

The camp was already under arms. Montcalm ordered up all the French and Canadian regulars and all the militia, except 2000. Vaudreuil at once ordered a battalion of regulars and all the militia, except 2000, to stay where they were. Montcalm asked for the whole of the twenty-five field guns in Quebec. Vaudreuil gave him three.

Wolfe's 5000 redcoats were already on the Plains when Montcalm galloped up to the crest of ground from which he could see them, only six hundred yards away. The line was very thin, only two-deep, and its right did not seem to have come up yet. Some sailors were dragging up a gun, not far from the Foulon. Perhaps Wolfe's landing was not quite completed?

Meanwhile half the 5000 that Montcalm was able to get into action was beginning to fire at the redcoats from under cover and at some distance. This half was militia and Indians, 2000 of the first and 500 of the second. The flat and open battlefield that Wolfe had in his front was almost empty. It was there that Montcalm would have to fight with his other 2500, in eight small battalions of regulars —five French and three Canadian.

These regulars wasted no time, once they were clear of Vaudreuil, who still thought some of them should stay down at Montmorency. They crossed the bridge of boats and the valley of the St Charles, mounted the Heights of Abraham, and formed up about as far on the inner side of the crest of ground as Wolfe's men were on the outer side. Montcalm called his brigadiers, colonels, and staff together, to find out if anyone could explain the movements of the British. No one knew anything certain. But most of them thought that the enemy's line was not yet complete, and that, for this reason, as well as because the sailors were beginning to land entrenching tools and artillery, it would be better to attack at once.

Montcalm agreed. In fact, he had no choice. He was now completely cut off from

the St Lawrence above Quebec. His army could not be fed by land for another week. Most important of all, by prompt action he might get in a blow before Wolfe was quite ready. There was nothing to wait for. Bougainville must have started down the river bank, as hard as his tired-out men could march. To wait for French reinforcements meant to wait for British ones too, and the British would gain more by reinforcements than the French. The fleet was closing in. Boats crowded with marines and sailors were rowing to the Foulon, with tools and guns for a siege. Already a naval brigade was on the beach.

Montcalm gave the signal, the eight battalions stepped off, reached the crest of the hill, and came in sight of their opponents. Wolfe's front was of six battalions two-deep, about equal in numbers to Montcalm's eight battalions six-deep. The redcoats marched forward a hundred paces and halted. The two fronts were now a quarter of a mile apart. Wolfe's front represented the half of his army. Some of the other half were curved back to protect the flanks against the other half of Montcalm's, and some were in reserve, ready for Bougainville.

Montcalm rode along his little line for the last time. There stood the heroes of his four great victories—Oswego, Fort William Henry, Ticonderoga, Montmorency. He knew that at least half of them would follow wherever he led. The three Canadian battalions on his right and left might not close with an enemy who had bayonets and knew how to use them, when they themselves had none. The Languedoc battalion of Frenchmen was also a little shaky, because it had been obliged to take most of the bad recruits sent out to replace the tried soldiers captured by the British fleet in 1755. But the remainder were true as steel.

'Don't you want a little rest before you begin?' asked Montcalm, as he passed the veteran Royal Roussillon. 'No, no; we 're never tired before a battle!' the men shouted back. And so he rode along, stopping to say a word to each battalion on the way. He had put on his full uniform that morning, thinking a battle might be fought. He wore the green, gold-embroidered coat he had worn at court when he presented his son to the king and took leave of France for ever. It was open in front, showing his polished cuirass. The Grand Cross of St Louis glittered on his breast,

over as brave a heart as any of the Montcalms had shown during centuries in the presence of the foe. From head to foot he looked the hero that he was; and he sat his jet-black charger as if the horse and man were one.

He reined up beside the Languedoc battalion, hoping to steady it by leading it in person. As he did so he saw that the Canadians and Indians were pressing Wolfe's flanks more closely from under cover and that there was some confusion in the thin red line itself, where its skirmishers, having been called in, were trying to find their places in too much of a hurry. This was his only chance. Up went his sword, and the advance began, the eight six-deep battalions stepping off together at the slow march, with shouldered arms. 'Long live the King and Montcalm!' they shouted, as they had shouted at Ticonderoga; and the ensigns waved the fleurs-de-lis aloft.

Half the distance was covered in good formation. But when the three battalions of Canadian regulars came within musket-shot they suddenly began to fire without orders, and then dropped down flat to reload. This threw out the line; and there was more wavering when the French saw that the Canadians, far from regaining their places,

were running off to the flanks to join the militia and Indians under cover. Montcalm was now left with only his five French battalions—five short, thick lines, four white and one blue, against Wolfe's long, six-jointed, thin red line. He halted a moment, to steady the men, and advanced again in the way that regulars at that time fought each other on flat and open battlefields: a short march of fifty paces or so, in slow time, a halt to fire, another advance and another halt to fire, until the foes came to close quarters, when a bayonet charge gave the victory to whichever side had kept its formation the better.

A single British gun was firing grape-shot straight into the French left and cutting down a great many men. But the thin red line itself was silent; silent as the grave and steadfast as a wall. Presently the substitutes in the Languedoc battalion could not endure the strain any longer. They fired without orders and could not be stopped. At the same time Montcalm saw that his five little bodies of men were drifting apart. When the Canadian regulars had moved off, they had left the French flanks quite open. In consequence, the French battalions nearest

the flanks kept edging outwards, the ones on the right towards their own right and the ones on the left towards their own left, to prevent themselves from being overlapped by the long red line of fire and steel when the two fronts closed. But this drift outwards, while not enough to reach Wolfe's flanks, was quite enough to make a fatal gap in Montcalm's centre. Thus the British, at the final moment, took the French on both the outer and both the inner flanks as well as straight in front.

The separating distance was growing less and less. A hundred paces now! Would that grim line of redcoats never fire? Seventy-five!! Fifty!!—Forty!!!—the glint of a sword-blade on the British right!—the word of command to their grenadiers!—'*Ready!*—*Present!*——*Fire!!!*' Like six single shots from as many cannon the British volleys crashed forth, from right to left, battalion by battalion, all down that thin red line.

The stricken front rank of the French fell before these double-shotted volleys almost to a man. When the smoke cleared off the British had come nearer still. They had closed up twenty paces to their front, reloading as they came. And now, taking the six-deep French in front and flanks, they fired as

fast as they could, but steadily and under perfect control. The French, on the other hand, were firing wildly, and simply crumbling away before that well-aimed storm of lead. The four white lines melted into shapeless masses. They rocked and reeled like sinking vessels. In a vain, last effort to lead them on, their officers faced death and found it. All three brigadiers and two of the colonels went down. Montcalm was the only one of four French generals still on horseback; and he was wounded while trying to keep the Languedoc men in action.

Suddenly, on the right, the Sarre and Languedoc battalions turned and ran. A moment more, and Béarn and Guienne, in the centre, had followed them. The wounded Montcalm rode alone among the mad rush of panic-stricken fugitives. But over towards the St Lawrence cliffs he saw the blue line of the Royal Roussillon still fighting desperately against the overlapping redcoats. He galloped up to them. But, even as he arrived, the whole mass swayed, turned, and broke in wild confusion. Only three officers remained. Half the battalion was killed or wounded. Nothing could stay its flight.

On the top of the crest of ground, where he

had formed his line of attack only a few minutes before, Montcalm was trying to rally some men to keep back the pursuing British when he was hit again, and this time he received a mortal wound. He reeled in the saddle, and would have fallen had not two faithful grenadiers sprung to his side and held him up. His splendid black charger seemed to know what was the matter with his master, and walked on gently at a foot's pace down the Grande Allée and into Quebec by the St Louis Gate. Pursuers and pursued were now racing for the valley of the St Charles, and Quebec itself was, for the moment, safe.

Never was there a greater rout than on the Plains of Abraham at ten o'clock that morning. The French and Canadians ran for the bridge of boats, their only safety. But they came very close to being cut off both in front and rear. Vaudreuil had poked his nose out of one of the gates of Quebec when the flight began. He then galloped down to the bridge, telling the Canadians on the Côte d'Abraham, which was the road from the Plains to the St Charles, to make a stand there. Having got safely over the bridge himself, he was actually having it cut adrift, when some officers rushed up and stopped this crowning act of shame. This

saved the fugitives in front of the broken army.

Meanwhile the flying troops were being saved in the rear by the Canadians at the Côte d'Abraham under a French officer called Dumas. These Canadians had not done much in the battle, for various reasons: one was that the fighting was in the open, a mode of warfare in which they had not been trained; the British, moreover, used bayonets, of which the Canadians themselves had none. But in the bush along the crest of the cliffs overlooking the valley they fought splendidly. After holding back the pursuit for twenty minutes, and losing a quarter of their numbers, they gave way. Then a few of them made a second stand at a mill and bakery in the valley itself, and were killed or wounded to a man.

Montcalm heard the outburst of firing at the Côte d'Abraham. But he knew that all was over now, that Canada was lost, and with it all he had fought for so nobly, so wisely, and so well. As he rode through St Louis Gate, with the two grenadiers holding him up in his saddle, a terrified woman shrieked out: 'Oh! look at the marquis, he 's killed, he 's killed!' 'It is nothing at all, my kind friend,' answered Montcalm, trying to sit up straight, 'you must

not be so much alarmed!' Five minutes later the doctor told him he had only a few hours to live. 'So much the better,' he replied; 'I shall not see the surrender of Quebec.'

On hearing that he had such a short time before him his first thought was to leave no possible duty undone. He told the commandant of Quebec that he had no advice to give about the surrender. He told Vaudreuil's messenger that there were only three courses for the army to follow: to fight again, surrender, or retreat towards Montreal; and that he would advise a retreat. He dictated a letter to the British commander. It was written by his devoted secretary, Marcel, and delivered to Wolfe's successor, Townshend:

'Sir, being obliged to surrender Quebec to your arms I have the honour to recommend our sick and wounded to Your Excellency's kindness, and to ask you to carry out the exchange of prisoners, as agreed upon between His Most Christian Majesty and His Britannic Majesty. I beg Your Excellency to rest assured of the high esteem and great respect with which I have the honour to be your most humble and obedient servant,

MONTCALM.'

And then, his public duty over, he sent a message to each member of his family at Candiac, including 'poor Mirète,' for not a word had come from France since the British fleet had sealed up the St Lawrence, and he did not yet know which of his daughters had died.

Having remembered his family he gave the rest of his thoughts to his God and to that other world he was so soon to enter. All night long his lips were seen to move in prayer. And, just as the dreary dawn was breaking, he breathed his last.

'War is the grave of the Montcalms.'

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

MONTCALM is, of course, a very prominent character in every history of New France. Parkman (*Montcalm and Wolfe*) tried to be just, but the facts were not all before him when he wrote. The Abbé Casgrain (*Guerre du Canada, 1756-1760: Montcalm et Lévis*) was unfortunately too prejudiced in favour of Vaudreuil and Lévis to be just, much less generous, towards Montcalm; but the Honourable Thomas Chapais's work (*Le Marquis de Montcalm, 1712-1759*) based on much more nearly complete materials, does honour both to Montcalm and to French-Canadian scholarship. Captain Sautai's monograph on Ticonderoga (*Montcalm au Combat de Carillon*) is the best military study yet published. An elaborate bibliography of works connected with Montcalm's Quebec campaign is to be found in volume vi of Doughty's *Siege of Quebec*. The present work seems to be the only life of Montcalm written by an English-speaking author with access to all the original data, naval as well as military.

See also in this Series: *The Winning of Canada*; *The Great Fortress*; *The Acadian Exiles*.

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